

ALL THE YEAR ROUND.

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A DARK NIGHT'S WORK.

BY THE AUTHORESS OF "MARY BARTON."

CHAPTER IV.

THE summer afterwards Mr. Corbet came again to read with Mr. Ness. He did not perceive any alteration in himself, and indeed his early-matured character had hardly made progress during the last twelve months, whatever intellectual acquirements he might have made. Therefore it was astonishing to him to see the alteration in Ellinor Wilkins. She had shot up from a rather puny girl to a tall, slight young lady, with promise of great beauty in the face, which a year ago had only been remarkable for the fineness of the eyes. Her complexion was clear now, although colourless—twelve months ago he would have called it sallow—her delicate cheek was smooth as marble, her teeth were even and white, and her rare smiles called out a lovely dimple.

She met her former friend and lecturer with a grave shyness, for she remembered well how they had parted, and thought he could hardly have forgiven, much less forgotten, her passionate flinging away from him. But the truth was, after the first few hours of offended displeasure, he had ceased to think of it at all. She, poor child, by way of proving her repentance, had tried hard to reform her boisterous tom-boy manners, in order to show him that although she would not give up her dear old friend Dixon at his or any one's bidding, she would strive to profit by his lectures in all things reasonable. The consequence was, that she suddenly appeared to him as an elegant dignified young lady, instead of the rough little girl he remembered. Still, below her somewhat formal manners there lurked the old wild spirit, as he could plainly see, after a little more watching; and he began to wish to call this out, and to strive, by reminding her of old days, and all her childish frolics, to flavour her subdued manners and speech with a little of the former originality.

In this he succeeded. No one, neither Mr. Wilkins, nor Miss Monro, nor Mr. Ness, saw what this young couple were about—they did not know it themselves; but before the summer was over they were desperately in love with each other, or perhaps I should rather say, Ellinor

was desperately in love with him—he, as passionately as he could be with any one; but in him the intellect was superior in strength to either affections or passions.

The causes of the blindness of those around them were these. Mr. Wilkins still considered Ellinor as a little girl, as his own pet, his darling, but nothing more. Miss Monro was anxious about her own improvement. Mr. Ness was deep in a new edition of Horace, which he was going to bring out with notes. I believe Dixon would have been keener-sighted, but Ellinor kept Mr. Corbet and Dixon apart for obvious reasons—they were each her dear friends, but she knew that Mr. Corbet did not like Dixon, and suspected that the feeling was mutual.

The only change of circumstances between this year and the previous one consisted in this development of attachment between the young people. Otherwise, everything went on apparently as usual. With Ellinor the course of the day was something like this. Up early and into the garden until breakfast-time, when she made tea for her father and Miss Monro in the dining-room, always taking care to lay a little nosegay of freshly-gathered flowers by her father's plate. After breakfast, when the conversation had been on general and indifferent subjects, Mr. Wilkins withdrew into the little study, so often mentioned. It opened out of a passage that ran between the dining-room and the kitchen, on the left hand of the hall. Corresponding to the dining-room on the other side of the hall was the drawing-room, with its side-window serving as a door into a conservatory, and this again opened into the library. Old Mr. Wilkins had added a semicircular projection to the library, which was lighted by a dome above, and showed off his son's Italian purchases of sculpture. The library was by far the most striking and agreeable room in the house; and the consequence was that the drawing-room was seldom used, and had the aspect of cold discomfort common to apartments rarely occupied. Mr. Wilkins's study, on the other side of the house, was also an after-thought, built only a few years ago, and projecting from the regularity of the outside wall: a little stone passage led to it from the hall, small, narrow, and dark, and out of which no other door opened.

The study itself was a hexagon, one side-window, one fireplace, and the remaining four

being occupied with doors, two of which have been already mentioned, another at the foot of the narrow winding stairs which led straight into Mr. Wilkins's bedroom over the dining-room, and the fourth opening into a path through the shrubbery to the right of the flower-garden as you looked from the house. This path led through the stable-yard, and then by a short cut right into Hamley, and brought you out close to Mr. Wilkins's office; it was by this way he always went and returned to his business. He used the study for a smoking and lounging-room principally, although he always spoke of it as a convenient place for holding confidential communications with such of his clients as did not like discussing their business within the possible hearing of all the clerks in his office. By the outer door he could also pass to the stables, and see that all proper care was taken at all times of his favourite and valuable horses. Into this study Ellinor would follow him of a morning, helping him on with his great-coat, mending his gloves, talking an infinite deal of merry fond nothing, and then, clinging to his arm, she would accompany him in his visits to the stables, going up to the shyest horses, and petting them, and patting them, and feeding them with bread all the time that her father held converse with Dixon. When he was finally gone—and sometimes it was a long time first—she returned to the schoolroom to Miss Monroe, and tried to set herself hard at work at her lessons. But she had not much time for steady application; if her father had cared for her progress in anything, she would and could have worked hard at that study or accomplishment; but Mr. Wilkins, the ease and pleasure-loving man, did not wish to make himself into the pedagogue, as he would have considered it, if he had ever questioned Ellinor with a real steady purpose of ascertaining her intellectual progress. It was quite enough for him that her general intelligence and variety of desultory and miscellaneous reading made her a pleasant and agreeable companion for his hours of relaxation.

At twelve o'clock, Ellinor put away her books with joyful eagerness, kissed Miss Monroe, asked her if they should go a regular walk, and was always rather thankful when it was decided that it would be better to stroll in the garden—a decision very often come to, for Miss Monroe hated fatigue, hated dirt, hated scrambling, and dreaded rain; all of which are evils, the chances of which are never far distant from country walks. So Ellinor danced out into the garden, worked away among her flowers, played at the old games among the roots of the trees, and, when she could, seduce Dixon in the flower-garden to have a little consultation as to the horses and dogs. For it was one of her father's few strict rules that Ellinor was never to go into the stable-yard unless he were with her; so these tête-à-têtes with Dixon were always held in the flower-garden, or bit of forest ground surrounding it. Miss Monroe sat and basked in the sun,

close to the dial, which made the centre of the gay flower-beds, upon which the dining-room and study windows looked.

At one o'clock, Ellinor and Miss Monroe dined. An hour was allowed for Miss Monroe's digestion, which Ellinor again spent out of doors, and at three lessons began again and lasted till five. At that time they went to dress preparatory for the schoolroom tea at half-past five. After tea Ellinor tried to prepare her lessons for the next day; but all the time she was listening for her father's footstep—the moment she heard that, she dashed down her book, and flew out of the room to welcome and kiss him. Seven was his dinner-hour; he hardly ever dined alone; indeed, he often dined from home four days out of seven, and when he had no engagement to take him out he liked to have some one to keep him company. Mr. Ness very often, Mr. Corbet along with him if he was in Hamley, a stranger friend, or one of his clients. Sometimes, reluctantly, and when he fancied he could not avoid the attention without giving offence, Mr. Wilkins would ask Mr. Dunster, and then the two would always follow Ellinor into the library at a very early hour, as if their subjects for tête-à-tête conversation were quite exhausted. With all his other visitors, Mr. Wilkins sat long—yes, and yearly longer; with Mr. Ness, because they became interested in each other's conversation; with some of the others, because the wine was good, and the host hated to spare it.

Mr. Corbet used to leave his tutor and Mr. Wilkins and saunter into the library. There sat Ellinor and Miss Monroe, each busy with their embroidery. He would bring a stool to Ellinor's side, question and tease her, interest her, and they would become entirely absorbed in each other, Miss Monroe's sense of propriety being entirely set at rest by the consideration that Mr. Wilkins must know what he was about in allowing a young man to become thus intimate with his daughter, who, after all, was but a child.

Mr. Corbet had lately fallen into the habit of walking up to Ford Bank for the Times every day, about twelve o'clock, and lounging about in the garden until one; not exactly with either Ellinor or Miss Monroe, but certainly far more at the beck and call of the one than of the other.

Miss Monroe used to think he would have been glad to stay and lunch at their early dinner, but she never gave the invitation, and he could not well stay without her expressed sanction. He told Ellinor all about his mother and sisters, and their ways of going on, and spoke of them and of his father as of people she was one day certain to know, and to know intimately; and she did not question or doubt this view of things; she simply acquiesced.

He had some discussion with himself as to whether he should speak to her, and so secure her promise to be his before returning to Cambridge or not. He did not like the formality of an application to Mr. Wilkins, which would, after all, have been the proper and straight-

forward course to pursue with a girl of her age—she was barely sixteen. Not that he anticipated any difficulty on Mr. Wilkins's part; his approval of the intimacy which at their respective ages was pretty sure to lead to an attachment, was made as evident as could be by actions without words. But there would have to be reference to his own father, who had no notion of the whole affair, and would be sure to treat it as a boyish fancy; as if at twenty-one Ralph was not a man, as clear and deliberative in knowing his own mind, as resolute as he ever would be in deciding upon the course of exertion that should lead him to independence and fame, if such were to be attained by clear intellect and a strong will.

No; to Mr. Wilkins he would not speak for another year or two.

But should he tell Ellinor in direct terms of his love—his intention to marry her?

Again he inclined to the more prudent course of silence. He was not afraid of any change in his own inclinations: of them he was sure. But he looked upon it in this way: If he made a regular declaration to her she would be bound to tell it to her father. He should not respect her or like her so much if she did not. And yet this course would lead to all the conversations, and discussions, and references to his own father, which made his own direct appeal to Mr. Wilkins appear a premature step to him.

Whereas he was as sure of Ellinor's love for him as if she had uttered all the vows that women ever spoke; he knew even better than she did how fully and entirely that innocent girlish heart was his own. He was too proud to dread her inconstancy for an instant; "besides," as he went on to himself, as if to make assurance doubly sure, "whom does she see? Those stupid Holsters, who ought to be only too proud of having such a girl for their cousin, ignore her existence, and spoke slightly of her father only the very last time I dined there. The country people in this precious Boetian—shire clutch at me because my father goes up to the Plantagenets for his pedigree—not one whit for myself—and neglect Ellinor; and only condescend to her father because old Wilkins was nobody-knows-who's son." So much the worse for them, but so much the better for me in this case. I'm above their silly antiquated prejudices, and shall be only too glad when the fitting time comes to make Ellinor my wife. After all, a prosperous attorney's daughter may not be considered an unsuitable match for me—y younger son as I am. Ellinor will make a glorious woman three or four years hence; just the style my father admires—such a figure, such limbs. I'll be patient and bide my time, and watch my opportunities, and all will come right."

So he bade Ellinor farewell in a most reluctant and affectionate manner, although his words might have been spoken out in Hamley market-place, and were little different from what he said to Miss Monro. Mr. Wilkins

half expected a disclosure to himself of the love which he suspected in the young man; and when that did not come, he prepared himself for a confidence from Ellinor. But she had nothing to tell him, as he very well perceived from the child's open unembarrassed manner when they were left alone together after dinner. He had refused an invitation, and shaken off Mr. Ness, in order to have this confidential tête-à-tête with his motherless girl; and there was nothing to make confidence of. He was half inclined to be angry; but then he saw that, although sad, she was so much at peace with herself and with the world, that he, always an optimist, began to think the young man had done wisely in not tearing open the rosebud of her feelings too prematurely.

The next two years passed over in much the same way—or a careless spectator might have thought so. I have heard people say, that if you look at a regiment advancing with steady step over a plain on a review-day, you can hardly tell that they are not merely marking time on one spot of ground unless you compare their position with some other object by which to mark their progress, so even is the repetition of the movement. And thus the end and events of the future life of this father and daughter were hardly perceived in their steady advance, and yet over the monotony and flat uniformity of their days sorrow came marching down upon them like an armed man. Long before Mr. Wilkins had recognised its shape it was approaching him in the distance—as in fact it is approaching all of us at this very time—you, reader, I, writer, have each our great sorrow bearing down upon us. He may be yet beyond the dimmest point of our horizon, but in the stillness of the night our hearts shrink at the sound of his coming footstep. Well is it for those who fall into the hands of the Lord rather than into the hands of men; but worst of all is it for him who has hereafter to mingle the gall of remorse with the cup held out to him by his doom.

Mr. Wilkins took his ease and his pleasure yet more and more every year of his life; nor did the quality of his ease and his pleasure improve; it seldom does with self-indulgent people. He cared less for any books that strained his faculties a little,—less for engravings and sculpture,—perhaps more for pictures. He spent extravagantly on his horses; "thought of eating and drinking." There was no open vice in all this, so that any awful temptation to crime should come down upon him, and startle him out of his mode of thinking and living; half the people about him did much the same, as far as their lives were patent to his unreflecting observation. But most of his associates had their duties to do, and did them with a heart and a will, in the hours when he was not in their company. Yes! I call them duties, though some of them might be self-imposed and purely social; they were engagements they had entered into, either tacitly or with words, and that they fulfilled. From Mr. Hetherington, the Master

of the Hounds, who was up at no one knows what hour to go down to the kennel and see that the men did their work well and thoroughly, to stern old Sir Lionel Playfair, the upright magistrate, the thoughtful conscientious landlord—they did their work according to their lights—there were few laggards among those with whom Mr. Wilkins associated on the field or at the dinner-table. Mr. Ness—though as a clergyman he was not so active as he might have been, yet even Mr. Ness fagged away with his pupils and his new edition of the classics. Only Mr. Wilkins, dissatisfied with his position, neglected to fulfil the duties thereof. He imitated the pleasures, and longed for the fancied leisure of those about him; leisure that he imagined would be so much more valuable in the hands of a man like him, full of intellectual tastes and accomplishments, than frittered away by dull bores of untravelled, uncultivated squires—whose company he never refused, be it said, by the way.

And yet daily Mr. Wilkins was sinking from the intellectually to the sensually self-indulgent man. He lay late in bed, and hated Mr. Dunster for his significant glance at the office-clock, when he announced to his master that such and such a client had been waiting more than an hour to keep an appointment. "Why did not you see him yourself, Dunster? I am sure you would have done quite as well as me," Mr. Wilkins sometimes replied, partly with a view of saying something pleasant to the man whom he disliked and feared. Mr. Dunster always replied in a meek matter-of-fact tone, "Oh, sir, they would not like to talk over their affairs with a subordinate."

And every time he said this, or some speech of the same kind, the idea came more and more clearly into Mr. Wilkins's head of how pleasant it would be to himself to take Dunster into partnership, and thus throw all the responsibility of the real work and drudgery upon his clerk's shoulders. Importunate clients, who would make appointments at unseasonable hours and would keep to them, might confide in the partner although they would not in the clerk. The great objections to this course were, first and foremost, Mr. Wilkins's strong dislike to Mr. Dunster,—his repugnance to his company, his dress, his voice, his ways,—all of which irritated his employer, till his state of feeling towards Dunster might be called antipathy; next, Mr. Wilkins was fully aware of the fact that all Mr. Dunster's actions and words were carefully and thoughtfully prearranged to further the great unspoken desire of his life—that of being made a partner where now he was but a servant. Mr. Wilkins took a malicious pleasure in tantalising Mr. Dunster by such speeches as the one I have just mentioned, which always seemed like an opening to the desired end, yet for a long time never led any further. Yet all the while that end was becoming more and more certain; and at last it was arrived at.

Mr. Dunster always suspected that the final push was given by some circumstance from

without; some reprimand for neglect—some threat of withdrawal of business that his employer had received; but of this he could not be certain; all he knew was, that Mr. Wilkins proposed the partnership to him in about as ungracious a way in which such an offer could be made; an ungraciousness which, after all, had so little effect on the real matter in hand, that Mr. Dunster could pass it over with a private sneer, while taking all possible advantage of the tangible benefit it was now in his power to accept.

Mr. Corbet's attachment to Ellinor had been formally disclosed to her just before this time. He had left college, was entered at the Middle Temple, and was fagging away at law, and feeling success in his own power; Ellinor was to "come out" at the next Hamley assemblies; and her lover began to be jealous of the possible admirers her striking appearance and piquant conversation might attract, and thought it a good time to make the success of his suit certain by spoken words and promises.

He needed not have alarmed himself even enough to make him take this step, if he had been capable of understanding Ellinor's heart as fully as he did her appearance and conversation. She never missed the omission of formal words and promises. She considered herself as fully engaged to him, as much pledged to marry him and no one else, before he had asked the final question, as afterwards. She was rather surprised at the necessity for those decisive words.

"Ellinor, dearest, will you—can you marry me?" and her reply was—given with a deep blush I must record, and in a soft murmuring tone—

"Yes—oh yes—I never thought of anything else."

"Then I may speak to your father, may not I, darling?"

"He knows; I am sure he knows; and he likes you so much. Oh, how happy I am!"

"But still I must speak to him before I go. When can I see him, my Ellinor? I must go back to town at four o'clock."

"I heard his voice in the stable-yard only just before you came. Let me go and find out if he is gone to the office yet."

No! to be sure he was not gone. He was quietly smoking a cigar in his study, sitting in an easy-chair near the open window, and leisurely glancing at all the advertisements in the Times. He hated going to the office more and more since Dunster had become a partner; that fellow gave himself such airs of investigation and reprehension.

He got up, took the cigar out of his mouth, and placed a chair for Mr. Corbet, knowing well why he had thus formally prefaced his entrance into the room with a—

"Can I have a few minutes' conversation with you, Mr. Wilkins?"

"Certainly, my dear fellow. Sit down. Will you have a cigar?"

"No! I never smoke." Mr. Corbet despired

all these kind of indulgences, and put a little severity into his refusal, but quite unintentionally; for though he was thankful he was not as other men, he was not at all the person to trouble himself unnecessarily with their reformation.

"I want to speak to you about Ellinor. She says she thinks you must be aware of our mutual attachment."

"Well!" said Mr. Wilkins. He had resumed his cigar, partly to conceal his agitation at what he knew was coming. "I believe I have had my suspicions. It is not so very long since I was young myself." And he sighed over the recollection of Lettice, and his fresh, hopeful youth.

"And I hope, sir, as you have been aware of it, and have never manifested any disapprobation of it, that you will not refuse your consent—a consent I now ask you for—to our marriage."

Mr. Wilkins did not speak for a little while—a touch, a thought, a word more would have brought him to tears; for at the last he found it hard to give the consent which would part him from his only child. Suddenly he got up, and putting his hand into that of the anxious lover (for his silence had rendered Mr. Corbet anxious up to a certain point of perplexity—he could not understand the implied he would and he would not), Mr. Wilkins said,

"Yes! God bless you both. I will give her to you, some day—only it must be a long time first. And now go away—go back to her—for I can't stand this much longer."

Mr. Corbet returned to Ellinor. Mr. Wilkins sat down and buried his head in his hands, then went to his stable, and had Wildfire saddled for a good gallop over the country. Mr. Dunster waited for him in vain at the office, where an obstinate old country gentleman from a distant part of the shire would ignore Dunster's existence as a partner, and pertinaciously demanded to see Mr. Wilkins on important business.

OUR VILLAGE ON THE MEDITERRANEAN.

It is with the cowardly satisfaction of knowing that these lines are never likely to be read by my neighbours that I have dared to write "Our Village" at the head of this paper, for we stand in the census return of '58 as "Cetta," with three thousand inhabitants, for the most part engaged in the Cabotaggio (coasting trade) and the fisheries. Still, with all this, we are dismissed with about five lines—two more than we obtained in '41—and which are devoted to recording that some attempt has been made to work the marble quarries in our vicinity, but hitherto without any marked success.

Very brief and very dry is all this. But why should we complain? What are more succinct than the few words which tell of birth, or death, or marriage—the whole story of our lives?

The census official doubtless believed he had

told the world all that it could want to know about us when he had noted how many we were, and how we lived. To our own eyes the record is, however, a very meagre one. We would liked to have read more circumstantially about ourselves; of our old castle, where Barbarossa is said to have passed a night; of our Duomo, built in 1270, and restored by Carlo Demetrio Zangani in 1604, whoever he might be; of a sulphur spring, of which no man ever drank twice, in our Piazza, and an inscription over it in the vulgar tongue, that no one has ever been able to render intelligible. These are all things of which we feel ourselves proud, and would like to have known that the world heard of them, the more since John Murray ignores us altogether.

Assuredly we were born to blush unseen, if any portion of our mission had been to blush at all; but I am proud to say it is not. We know and feel that we live in one of the most beautiful spots in Europe; that in our little land-locked harbour five—some say seven—great ships could lie at anchor; that the entrance could be defended against the navies of the world; that the steep mountains which gird us are clothed with olives and vines, and in the warmer spots with orange and lemon-trees; that our syndic has a magnolia in his garden; that our melons are famed in the markets of Chiavari and Sestri, and our chesnuts are the envy of four villages, crow-like on mountain peaks around us.

We know that the oldest amongst us has never seen snow nearer than the summit of the distant Apennines; and a dead lemon-tree, killed by the hard winter of 1814, stands out to witness the severity of a season which has never been cruel enough to revisit us.

It is true we are not very easy of access. The mule-path, which forms our high road, has some awkward turns, and skirts certain precipices more picturesque than safe; and, although we have the sea, it happens that, except those especially occupied in the fisheries or the small coast trade, few of us are sea-goers. Great Britain, it is said, has fewer swimmers amongst its population than certain kingdoms of Central Europe whose natives never saw the sea, and perhaps for some analogous reason. We, with the blue waters of this glorious bay at our feet, with land and sea winds alternating their gentle breezes, with all that can enchant the eye on every side, rarely venture on the water; but poke about the market-place and the little adjoining streets, or sit lazing at the Café del Commercio—so called in honour of an institution of which we know about as much as a South African does of an ice-house.

A guide-book or a gazetteer would most probably use little ceremony in setting us down as a fishing village, yet our own estimate of ourselves is not an humble one. I do not pretend to say that a stranger, if by any odd accident of life such a thing should come amongst us, arriving at Port Stretto, would at once jump at the conclusion that he was in the midst of a

population profoundly impressed with its own consequence, rigorously regardless of conventionalities, and tyrannical in its use of public opinion. In our every-day dress and demeanour we look fishermen, or mere idlers—loafers, in American parlance—that is, a class not disposed for work, nor rich enough for leisure. See us on a Sunday, or, better still, a “festa,” however, and what a marvellous change will come over your judgment!

The *Passeggiata*, or the Promenade, a walk which extends along the margin of the sea from the Dominican convent to a bluff rock about three-quarters of a mile distant, is our Mall. It is there the rank, the fashion, the beauty, the wit, and the “toilette” of Porto Stretto take their airing; and certainly a stranger spectacle cannot be imagined. During the week, as I have said, we take fish, or we salt them. We import little “colonials,” such as coffee and sugar, rum, and such-like, and export our onions and our melons, and occasionally our sardines; but, on the “festa,” we all come out in the masquerade of the smartest citizens—silks and satins and even velvets sail down the Promenade on square-built resolute-looking dark-featured damsels, escorted by beaux in lacquered boots, inconveniently high-heeled, and the very gaudiest of neckties. It is a grand display of fine clothes and suffering wearers, for there is a painful consciousness of extravagance and peril in the exploit that gives it a look of martyrdom. But we move along in stately fashion, criticising the apothecary’s wife and the tobaccoist’s daughter, and hoarding up our own suspicions that there is far more splendour abroad than many could rightly account for.

The “Order of the Course” prescribes that the walkers should pass before a certain stone bench, where our highest dignitaries usually seat themselves; and of these let me present the chief—our great man! It is with pride I am able to name the Signor Corroni, late vice-consul of Sardinia at Termakopolis, a diplomatist of the first order, a man of fashion, a man of pleasure, a man of letters, and a wit. His family for centuries belonged to Porto Stretto, and it was with a graceful good feeling towards his native town that he came back from all the turmoil and ambition of a public life to pass his last years amongst us. Though common eyes might only see in him a thin shrivelled up pinched featured man, with a pompous air and pretentious expression, wearing clothes of a very ancient cut, and a hat hill-shaped and towering, we know better; we recognise him as he is—the rival of Thiers and Palmerston and Gortschakoff, come to meditate in retirement over that dismemberment of Europe he has long predicted and now waits for. In this respect he is a terror to us. Dr. Cumming is a bland and sanguine prophet compared to him. He has had it all revealed to him. The Cossacks are to win, and the Pope be “nowhere!” He says he told Cavour so; he declares that the last days of that great man were embittered by not having listened to his counsels, which were, to make Porto Stretto the capital

of the kingdom, and declare war with France at once.

These opinions, I am bound to confess, are attributed to him, though I have never heard them myself from his lips, for he is the most mysterious of men. Why he went first to his Consulate, and why he left it, what he did there, or what he left undone, are alike shrouded in mystery. His daily life is a puzzle that none can decipher: on what he dines, or who cooks it, when he sleeps, and what he carries in certain wonderful pockets which, from their strange localities and size, seem to be closely derived from the pouches of the monkey tribe. But his grandest mystery is a large brass-bound and locked volume, in which he is seen to write every day; but whether it be a history of Porto Stretto, a chronicle of his own day, or a biography, none can divine. The bland smile of conscious greatness—a greatness which has not yet met its right acknowledgment—tells that there is something there. But what can it be?

Next in rank to the Signor Corroni is the Commandante del Porto, Signor Baretta, a large white-faced, close-shaven, unwholesome-looking man, so hopelessly deaf that he did not even hear the fall of a rock behind his house that stove in the wall of the kitchen. He is a great loyalist, however, flaunts his tricolor at any chance the calendar gives him, and, when asked how he is, answers, “Viva il Re Galantuomo!”

After him in position comes a very different character, a little unwashed peering-eyed mean-looking creature, who was once a something in the Customs, but has now retired on his pension of three hundred and eighty francs a year; this is Signor Crotta, the personification of all that is prying in curiosity and unabashed in impertinence. To buy a dozen of figs in the marketplace, to have your shoes soled, your watch repaired, to post a letter without his knowledge, are feats totally impossible. He is behind every door, and under every sofa, apparently; for he is the chronicle of all the secret events of our community.

It is said, too, that the mystery of Signor Corroni’s life is no mystery to him, but that in return for the great man’s notice he preserves it inviolable.

The last of our dignitaries, though the highest in local rank, is the sindaco, Signor Mordoni, a little dark-visaged suspicious-looking man, said to be in hourly communication with Mazzini and the Red Republicans; but so afraid of the consequences of his free opinions, that he talks of the Casa de Savoia on every possible or impossible occasion.

The same worthies, assisted by one Panocco, a very old snuff-begrimed priest, with a much-patched cassock, and the “assistant-judge,” who acts as customs officer and jailer also, in commandam, form a nightly committee at the apothecary’s, where the world at large is discussed, and very unfavourable opinions of it expressed, compared with the section of the same that inhabits Porto Stretto.

At nine, the society—la crème—assemble at

the Senora Fulvia's. She is the sister of the great Signor Corroni, a widow, and called, by what right no one knows, La Barronessa. She was for some years of her life a resident of Parma or Modena, her husband being the impressario of a theatre, and she entertains for our village, in consequence, a supreme contempt—sentiments which, I am bound to say, redound immensely to the consequence she assumes amongst us. A more dreary piece of worn-out finery cannot be imagined. She is a poor withered skinny creature, painted and lacquered, looking for all the world in her tinsel ghastliness like one of the glass-coffined saints one sees in certain churches; but she treats us with contumely, and we revere her. We accept the honour of being admitted to her dreary room and her fireless hearth as a proud distinction; and we utter the magic word *Barronessa* as a balm to our own hearts as frequently as possible.

The chief ornament of these receptions was—I cannot say is, for he has left us—a certain Signor Pipo Strani, who was the funny man of our village. He had been originally a drawing-master; but, in the course of his travels, had turned his hand to various pursuits. He had been railway clerk, language teacher, image-man, mesmerist lecturer, organ-grinder, and ended by being chief of the ballet at some small theatre, where he married a figurante, but soon deserted her, and came back to the isolation of our village till the scandal had evaporated, and he might return once more to that larger world that he loved.

We Porto Strettists knew nothing of this misadventure at the time. We regarded his visit as a sort of homage to his native town, as though saying, "See me here with all the suffrages of a great popularity, and mark how glad I am to revisit you." This was the sixth time of his coming back to Porto Stretto, and it was remarked that he had less of the tumultuous gaiety, the overflowing spirits, than before. He did all the little tricks at cards that used to delight us so much. We saw the knave of spades stuck up on the ceiling, and found the ace of diamonds in the most inscrutable of our pockets. He performed a whole opera: prima donna, tenor, barytone, basso, and chorus, with a storm scene and a grand discharge of fireworks at the finale. He conducted us through an imaginary zoological garden, and danced as a bear, skipped as a monkey, and howled as a tiger to perfection. Finally, he drew a chalk line on the floor, and performed on the tight rope with such inimitable mimicry, that we could not believe he was not dancing fathoms high in the air; and, when he asked for a walking-stick to balance himself, we actually did not at once know how we were to make it reach him. When arrived at the limit of the cord he sprang round, and made his feet hit the line exactly in the centre. I absolutely thought "the house would come down" with applause. This last display was an entirely new attraction. Poor fellow! it was a costly addition to his repertoire, for, as we afterwards learned, it was

Madame Strani herself that he was caricaturing.

He gave imitations of popular preachers and orators. I suppose they were good, but none of us had seen or heard Cavour, or Ricasoli, or Pantaleo, or Gavazzi; but we all relished a description of the Duke of Modena running away, and packing up his portmanteau before he left the kingdom. This was the last thing he gave us, and I remember we walked home together when it was over.

"Do you mean to stay a good while with us, Pipo?" asked I, as we smoked our cigars in the calm night air.

"Here? at Porto Stretto? Dio mi guarda! Heaven forbid!" said he. "What could I do here? Why, you are all poorer, more barbarous, more backward than ever. I left you years ago listening to that old donkey Corroni."

"The consul at Termakopolis!"

"The same," he resumed. "The stalest humbug that ever imposed upon a stupid community; and I find you at the same point still. Why isn't he burned in effigy? Why ain't you lighted with gas? Why haven't you a mole, and a harbour, an Academy of Fine Arts, and a statue of *me* in the Piazza? I am the only Porto Strettist that the world has ever heard of."

"That is true," said I; "but we are poor—very poor."

"And you'll always be poor," said he, "because you are a low grovelling miserable set, imagining yourselves prosperous when you can cheat in the price of a melon, and pass off a basket of indifferent figs as good ones. Wait, however. You'll see a change one of these days. I'm going up to Turin now to see Fabri, the minister, about my new telegraph apparatus. I'll see what can be done for you. You must have a railroad."

"But where to?"

"That does not matter—to Naples, to Moscow, anywhere. And you must have a lighthouse."

"But nobody wants a lighthouse."

"How could they, if they never saw one. Which of you wants caviare, or photography, or the Turkish bath? But you would all want them, and strive for them, and strain for them, if you only knew their worth. Gerolamo," said he, solemnly, "I thought better of you; but I was wrong; you are only fit for Porto Stretto." These were the last words I ever heard him speak.

I was sorry for his departure. The buoyant geniality of a sanguine hopeful temperament is a marvellous benefit to any dull community with few interests to move, few objects to excite them. Besides, Pipo served as a link between us and that outer world of which, Chinese-like, we entertained an uncommonly low opinion, and for whose habits, but for Pipo, we had thought even more hardly.

About six months after he left us an event occurred with which, rightfully or wrongfully, we concurred in connecting him. Just as the day was breaking, on a bright October morn-

ing, a small steamer, paddle-wheeled, and of great speed, swept round the extreme boundary that closes our bay to the westward, and, darting into the Gulf, dropped anchor. She carried an Italian tricolor at her mizen, but the wiseheads of Porto Stretto deemed that a mere device of treachery, and thought she was French or English—if the former, come for some purposes of annexation; if the latter, with commercial intentions to the full as dangerous and deep-minded.

We were all assembled on the beach as she launched a six-*oar* boat, and with two men in the stern-sheets rowed towards the shore. We had but time to perceive that one wore the uniform of a naval officer, as he sprang out and asked where the *sindaco* could be found.

"I am the *sindaco*," said Signor Mordoni, pale with terror, suspecting that his Mazzinism had reached Turin, and that the authorities had sent an armed force to capture him. "I am the *sindaco*," said he, trembling; "but my fellow-townsmen will bear me witness that I have always upheld the Casa de Savoia. Viva il Re!"

To which we all chorused "Viva il Re do Statuto!"

"I am charmed to find myself amongst gentlemen of such sentiments," said the officer, who evidently had hard work to repress a smile, "and I am proud to be the messenger of what must be agreeable tidings to Porto Stretto. But, first of all, may I visit your town?"

Not awaiting our cordial welcome, he assisted his friend to land, and arm-in-arm they both walked across the little pier and up the main street.

We would have liked to have done the honours of the place; to have shown them the monuments of the Casati family in the Duomo, and the two dogs in stone that form the crest and the fountain in the Piazza, and the curious excavations where the Romans used to make salt; but they would not heed our suggestions. They went prying and spying about of themselves, and, whenever they saw a point of any eminence, always getting upon it, to take a view of the surrounding country.

At last, after scouring through every lane and alley of the town for about two hours, they came back into the Piazza, and, taking their stand on the stone steps of the town-hall, the naval man said, "I see nothing better than this!"

"I agree with you," replied the other; "here there is ample space, a good rock foundation, and apparently plenty of water."

"I have it," muttered little Crotta in my ear. "It is a summer palace for the king they are going to build here." Nor did the guess seem a bad one, as the strangers began to inquire what were the ordinary wages of workmen—masons, carpenters, and common labourers. Where stones could be quarried, where sand and lime procured. They next asked if the place were salubrious. With one accord we declared that illness was unknown amongst us; and that our old people, when wearied out, often went to Sestri or Nerai to die. His majesty

will take ten years off by his first summer here," said one of the bolder ones amongst us.

"It is not for his majesty's personal use the building we are now projecting," said the man in plain clothes.

"No," said the other. "We have come down here by the orders of the minister of war, who has heard much of your loyalty."

"We are loyal to the death," cried we together.

"He knows it," resumed he, "and the extreme isolation of this spot, rarely invaded by travellers, and secure from that movement of traffic which would be injurious to our views, he has fixed upon this spot."

Great excitement amongst the listeners.

"When a place," continued the officer, "has not above half a dozen narrow streets, and a few hundred inhabitants——"

"Three thousand two hundred and twelve, of whom eleven hundred and fifty-four are males."

"And the remainder females, probably," said the naval man. "And, as I said before, when one can chance upon a little well-secured spot like this, with no buildings of any great size or value, it can't much matter to the rest of the world, if, some fine day, you were to be blown sky-high in the air. That is the reason we have come here to lay the foundation of a POWDER TOWER!"

If he had screamed out "Powder Mine," we couldn't have fled more precipitately. We took to our heels in various directions, and one who by chance gained the shore, saw the ill-augured little craft weigh anchor and steam away; and, since that, we have heard no more of her.

WHITE ELEPHANTS.

WHEN the King of Siam has an enemy among his lords whom he detests, but whom it would not be polite to destroy publicly—one who must be despatched without long delay, but whose poison must be sweetened, and for whom the edge of the axe must be gilded—he sends him a white elephant. Not that the gift is one of either profit or pleasure, for the brute must not be shot, nor given away, nor put to mean uses of hire or labour; he must not carry a howdah nor drag a plough; but must be cared for and fed and pampered and adulterated, and kept, like a tough-skinned Apis as he is, in the splendid idleness of a four-footed god. He must have his body-guard and his palace; his attendants and his flatterers; his huge feet may trample down crops and vineyards if it pleases him to walk that way, and his capacious trunk may draw up the last drop of water in the well for his morning bath, while human souls are perishing from drought. All is permitted to him, and he must be cared for and indulged first of all the world; for he is the white elephant of royal favouring, to be received with gratitude and maintained with cost. In the end, the cost is so great that the receiver is ruined, and commits suicide—the white elephant having proved as efficacious for punishment as a bowstring or a bowl of poison. All the better, indeed, because

the deadlier design was masked beneath the appearance of consummate favour.

Neither is the kingdom of Siam, nor that of Persia, mentioned in a recent number, the only place where one receives white elephants, to the destruction of happiness and life; and that intelligent pachiderm, with his waving trunk and flapping ears, his caution, his cunning, and his "fidgetiness," is not the only form in which favours are received. Friends and fortune often play the part of Siamese royalty, and offer us gifts of honour quite as ruinous and inconvenient. What is it but a white elephant gift, when your brother abroad sends you a huge case full of foreign rarities, which you are by no means to part with to dealers or discriminating friends, but must house with reverence—first paying the cost of transit and custom-house dues? You are a poor man, with narrow boundary lines set against your orchard; your life's acre grows only just enough potatoes for your pigs and children, leaving no surplus borders for greenhouse flowers; nevertheless, you are obliged to root up half a dozen rows of that useful, if vulgar esculent, to plant in their place geraniums and fuchsias, which give neither swill for the swine nor bread for the children. You have to go without essentials for the next six months, that you may load your chimney-pieces with carved ivory baskets holding nothing, and squat deities in filigree silver, not always impeccable with regard to delicacy, and utterly wrong-sided with regard to beauty. And not one of which you would value a farthing, or would regret to see consigned to the dust-heap this very day. But your friends congratulate you on the generosity of your brother abroad: and the virtuosi among them envy you, or tempt you with fiendish offers of fabulous wealth, if you will part with your book of Japanese costumes, or your Ganesa in jade-stone, with Confucius in Chinese silver, or Isis in verdigrised bronze: offers of fabulous wealth impossible to be accepted, yet for the half of which you would transfer to them the whole consignment, satisfied if you could get back your original outlay at the custom-house, not to speak of the running account at the framemaker's and the decorator's, not yet brought to a stand-still. Your brother abroad did not think of all this. He meant only to do you honour, and to give you a white elephant that would exalt your fame far above that of your friends and neighbours.

Your father-in-law did the same when he presented you with a new carpet for your drawing-room, on the tenth anniversary of your wedding-day. It was a bran-new Brussels, all red and green and white and yellow; a gorgeous Brussels, worth four times as much as that modest moss-coloured Kidderminster, which you were ogling at Shoolbred's. It killed all the shabby furniture of ten years' standing, and reduced to instant and unutterable ruin what had formerly been nothing more than permissible decadence. It made your curtains and your furniture, your paint and your paper, your frames and your chandeliers, simply impossible; and you found

yourself some eighty pounds the worse—your experience of a white elephant.

My dear wife had a white elephant given her, when her mother presented her with that magnificent brocaded silk, which was as stiff as a board and as bright as the sunlight. She could not forbear having it "made up," you know; that was absolutely necessary; but, of course, she would not have it "made up" by little Miss Twopenny, who did her common things well enough, but who was by no means equal to brocaded silk that would "stand by itself." She must go to Madame Grandehose, who had such a "fit" and such taste, and do dear mamma's present justice. So she went to Madame Grandehose; and Madame Grandehose undertook her brocade, and furthermore enlightened her on the contingent necessities of the situation—on the lace and the flowers and the feathers and the thousand-and-one costly trimmings which must be added to do dear mamma's handsome present justice. My wife found, or rather I did for her, when the bill came in, that the trappings of her white elephant had cost more than our whole year's clothes of ordinary wear—that mamma's one brocade came to as much as her entire wardrobe, summer and winter included. Besides, as she very acutely argued, what was the good of a brocade like that, if no one saw it? It was a pity to have spent so much money, only to lay the brocade by in cedar shavings. As she had a white elephant, it was as well to parade it through the streets; as she had a brocaded silk dress with Madame Grandehose's taste superadded, it was a social duty to wear it. So we gave a few dinners and a few evening parties, and went out as often as we were asked that season; and by the end of it, I had overdrawn my banker's account several hundred pounds, and Johnny was taken from school and put to business a year and a half too soon. His mother's brocaded silk stunted my boy's career for life; which was paying rather dearly for a white elephant.

I once knew a man who had set his heart on a certain very personable white elephant of his acquaintance; an elephant of power and presence, on whose majestic back he thought he could rear a howdah of surpassing grandeur which would shelter his life from the fierce heats of summer and the chill blasts of winter alike, and carry him safely and nobly to his goal. He was a poor man, a man without friends or fortune, who aspired to be the husband of a nobleman's dowerless daughter; by whose grand connexions he expected to rise to eminence in his profession, and whose powerful influence he thought would pull him through any difficulties that might beset him. That was his chart of calculation, his Mercator's Projection of the Universe of the future. Hers was the natural desire of the female elephant, whether white or black, for a home paddock and a gallant mate, for a troop of little baby elephants with their trunks in the air and their knees deep in sweet vernal grass, and for the broad roof-tree, broad enough to shelter love and happiness and grandeur all together; so she responded to the

call, and walked bravely through the gate of the paddock left open for her. But it did not answer. That paddock was too small for her ample creamy limbs; the roof-tree too narrow to harbour love and happiness and grandeur in a row; her baby elephants tossed up their trunks indeed, but it was in disdain at the coarse poor halm which barely covered their baby toes in place of the sweet vernal grass which should have grown above their knees; and when, in disgust at the poverty of the provisions offered, she broke down the paddock-gate and marched out into the open, she led her owner into a morass whence he never shook himself free, until he crawled under the harrow of the Insolvents' Court, and emerged with scratches on his back that bled and festered always. His white elephant did for him what all white elephants do for their owners; and when the end of time came, he lay on the road of life, a mangled wreck, with the print of an elephant's foot on his head.

Another white elephant that I know of brought her own trappings and provision with her. She was a rich wife, with a dowry that would have satisfied the most exacting. Surely there was no ruin looming in the distance here! If a creature brings its own corn, may it not eat safely in your manger? If it supplies its own silk and satin, can you not stitch up its howdah without pricking your fingers to the bone? The fortunate possessor of this special white elephant brought her to his home which her gold had gilded, and led her into the park which her acorns had planted; and he gave her full permission to walk beneath her own avenues, and eat the top-most branches of her own seedlings; to strengthen her manger with golden plates if she liked, provided she hammered them herself out of the nuggets of her own gold mines. So she did. But she ate so many more seedlings than her own acorns had planted, and she strengthened her manger with golden plates so outrageously thick, that in time she exhausted her supplies. Then she fed out of her owner's manger until she ate him up, body and bones. The wife was rich, but the woman was extravagant; and this special white elephant turned out in the end one of the most destructive of the tribe.

And among the biggest and whitest of the herd, are, and have been, royal visits to favoured noblemen. Very much flattered and honoured was courtly Leicester when the high starched ruff of the Leonine Virgin quivered beneath the lights of Kenilworth. Here was a white elephant whose sleek sides were worthy to be regarded and envied of all mankind! Here was a quadruped of strength, with dim forecastings of possible howdahs, and a swift and steady bearing to the highest point of the hill of fortune! But poor Leicester was no better off than the Siamese nobleman whom his king delights to favour left-handedly. His queen's grace was the white elephant of his life; mowing down irresistibly all the virtues and noblenesses of soul that might have borne goodly crops. If he had never been so gifted, he might have lived a happy man and have died an honest one, and

the shade of poor pale Amy would not have haunted his waking hours, and crime and dishonour would not have howled from the depths of the troubled past. But he kow-towed to his white elephant, and fell down and worshipped it, and kissed the dust from its feet, and spread out the tender branches of love and honour in its way, and the big feet trampled them down step by step, and tossed them like refuse: and then he died, and he, too, was counted but as refuse among men. Essex did the same; but he crawled about the white elephant's feet with such abased hardihood, that at last he got kicked heavily out of the way, with his life torn right asunder and the manhood trampled out of him. All for the sake of kow-towing to a queen, and bartering truth and life for a crowned old coquette's false smiles.

I remember how nightly I was enchanted and honoured when my Lady Fairstar did me the unfathomable honour of asking me to dine at her splendid mansion in a glorified region of Belgravia! It seemed to me, then a poor struggling barrister on a mythical yearly allowance, that I was on the high road to fortune at once; and that I had only to follow my Lady Fairstar's cavalcade to be landed safe in the very heart of the gardens of Aidann without delay. I went. I made no manner of doubt that I went to fascinate and to subdue, and that I should make such deep dints on the heart of our delightful hostess as not even the incessant rubbing of high life would be able to efface. And certainly my lady was gracious to me. But I found, in the end, that all I had made by the white elephant of her countenance, was a portentous bill at my tailor's, another portentous bill at my bootmaker's, an unnecessary supply of embroidered shirt-fronts and French cambric handkerchiefs, and my laundress left unpaid owing to the transfer of her funds to the pockets of the cabmen. That was what I found, when I took the two columns and added up the cost and the gain of my Lady Fairstar's Russian dinners, with scented ringlets laughingly shaken, and bewildering smiles prodigally bestowed. It was a white elephant; nothing but a white elephant; and I ran away from it. Those grand visits are terrible matters generally. You are asked to a country-house. You are acknowledged to be a crack shot and a first-rate rider, you tell a story capitally, and pocket every ball on the board; but at what a cost do you thus administer to the white elephant of your pride? At the cost of a year's income compressed into the six weeks of your stay. Butlers and footmen and pages and grooms and gillies and coachmen and the odd men about the place, and the odd women too—all to fee, all to pay—and the little wife left at home to fight with an unruly butcher who has undisciplined notions of trade, and to tell taradiddles to the landlord, who finds himself under the necessity of "looking you up." That is your white elephant when you get Lord Darkstar's invitation to his country-seat in the hunting season.

There are all sorts of white elephants in our

path! big and little, wild and tamed, tushers and toothless, of all heights, of all weights, of all hues. A patent of nobility to a poor gentleman with a miniature rent-roll bound in duodecimo, is a white elephant of tremendous appetite; so is knighthood to the honest leather-dresser made mayor of the town by the inadvertence of fortune, who offers the keys of the ancient city to her Majesty, and receives them back with the label of Sir attached to the handles; so is the colonelcy of the volunteers with a government salary of dimensions inadequate to the breadth of gold lace required; so is the mastership of the hunt, and so are the dogs kept at the old hall, with Lawyer Hardist's mortgages eating up the land. They are all honours and glories, and delights of the world and the flesh; but they are all white elephants.

What is it but a white elephant when that artist friend of yours generously presents you with a proof before letters of his own engraving? You don't want his proof before letters; you have quite as many pictures on your walls and brackets, and knick-knacks and ornaments, as you care for, and you really cannot afford a frame of sufficient quality to match the excellence of the engraving, according to your friend's arithmetic. Yet, it will not do to dishonour his white elephant. You must frame your engravings in gilded carving, and study which is the best light as religiously as you would study the Koran if you were a Mussulman, or the Shasters if you were a Brahmin. Your grandmother in a blue sash and mushroom hat, is made to turn her back on your grandfather in a full-bottomed periwig and snuff-coloured coat, that your friend's proof may have the post of honour on the wall; your favourite Clyte is dismounted from the bracket that your friend's proof may not be overshadowed in the extreme left-hand corner just before sunset; and when you have done all this, you find that the new gilding makes the old look deplorably shabby, and that you must have your whole wall-decoration retouched, because of this new bright bit of gold-leaf. Is not this a white elephant? I often wish that there were no such thing as a white elephant, and that when people make presents or bestow honours, they would give what was useful, and not a great glaring magnificence which makes everything else look mean. White elephants do not do in donkey stalls: which is a great fact too often overlooked.

HOUSEKEEPING IN INDIA.

PEOPLE in Europe frequently entertain the idea that, in a hot climate, a house is of very little importance. With savages in Australia, and small annuitants in Italy, this is to some extent the case. One of the savages—we have it on the authority of a voracious writer—considered a mansion which was presented to him, in the light of an ingenious contrivance intended to stand between him and the wind, and the furniture it contained as so much fuel, to be

brought out when wanted, for the cooking of his open air feasts—when he condescended to cook them at all. Annuitants in Italy, we all know, do not much care about what in England we call a home. A place of resort where they can meet their friends—which is of course a café—ranks as the first necessity; but, in feverishly hot India, the first question is, not how you may make life agreeable abroad, but how you may make it supportable at home. To an European, most certainly a good house is the first necessity, as in it he will probably find it desirable to spend three-fourths of his time.

Domestic life in India presents the same general features wherever you may happen to be located; but there are particular features which vary, and the variations mainly resolve themselves into the difference between town and country. In the presidencies—that is to say, in Calcutta, Madras, or Bombay—you will live in a house, although you may not occupy the whole of it, with actual stories and stairs. In the provinces you will abide in a bungalow—a building which looks nearly all roof without, and contains only one floor within, and that upon the ground. Bengal will furnish as good a comparison between the two as either of the other presidencies; to Bengal, then, we will confine our remarks.

The new arrival in Calcutta naturally goes in the first place to an hotel. Time was, when a man with a respectable coat and connexions would have put up at the residence of the first person he happened to light upon who had ever seen or heard of him before. But Calcutta hospitality has its limits, and it cannot extend itself to Peninsular and Oriental ship-loads arriving once a fortnight, and long-sea ship-loads arriving whenever they can: so unless you have a special invitation elsewhere, an hotel has become a matter of course.

A house in the "City of Palaces" is very apt to look like a palace. But the comparison applies only to that portion of the town where dwell the Europeans of the higher ranks, the civil and military officers, and principal merchants of the place. These congregate for the most part in the Chowringhee-road and the streets running therefrom, which make up the only neighbourhood where it is conventionally possible for a gentleman to reside. The Chowringhee-road is the most pleasantly situated thoroughfare in Calcutta. It resembles the best part of Park-lane in having houses only on one side of the way, the other side opening upon the Maidan, which, apart from the water, is by no means unlike the Park. The houses, however, are larger than the majority of those on the line from Piccadilly to Cumberland-gate, and are more imposing from the outside: the effect being mainly due to the large green verandahs on the first floor, and the inevitable jalousies to the windows—all of the same bright hue, rendered brighter by contrast with the white walls and clear atmosphere.

The "proper" thing for the new arrival, who has an excuse for setting up an establish-

ment, to do, is to take one of these houses. And, to do him justice, it must be said that he generally does so when he can, and occasionally when he can't—or shouldn't. The rent for a first-class mansion will be about three hundred rupees (thirty pounds) a month—occasionally more; and it may be less in the comparative obscurity of a back street. The furnishing is the next important business. In a place where people spend money on so comprehensive a scale as in Calcutta, the natural course would seem to be a visit to the principal upholsterers, the inspection of some pretty drawings and patterns, and a large order for the whole houseful of furniture, from the telescope-table on the dining-room floor, to the Chinese curiosities on the drawing-room mantelpiece. But this desperate course it is seldom necessary to resort to, for the reason that somebody else has always been doing it before you, and has found out the mistake;—several somebody elses, in fact, especially in the spring, which is the favourite season for going home, when the “valuable household furniture” of a dozen different persons at a time is entrusted to the hammers of the auctioneers. In the best houses this has been nearly all supplied by one maker, whose name is a guarantee for excellence in a metropolis where it is generally too hot for people to form a taste for themselves. It will always be found of the last approved pattern, and to have a general character which will make it available for any new distribution. The family likeness, indeed, between the tables, the chairs, the couches, and nearly everything else, is somewhat fatiguing to the free eye of Europe, accustomed to the exercise of individual fancy in such matters, and to the miscellaneous mode of furnishing which has become the custom in London.

In Calcutta, you are expected to fill your rooms according to a certain standard, from which few have the courage to deviate; those who do, find out their mistake when they want to sell again. The young housekeeper accordingly pays a visit, in the first instance, to the houses where goods are exposed on view, previous to the sale; and here he will not only find all the wood, china, glass, and plated ware that he wants, but varieties of unconsidered trifles which are generally withdrawn from auctions in England—personal matters, including books inscribed with all kinds of people's affectionate regards, and the most curious kind of accumulations. These, the owners, if going home, cannot dream of taking with them. From these he makes his selection—in as many different houses as he can find patience to visit—and his next thought, if he be a practical man, and like doing business for himself, will be to attend the sales when they come off, and bid for the objects of his fancy. Of this intention, however, he will soon be cured if his time be worth anything, or he have a decent amount of fastidiousness; for the brokers and others gathered together on such occasions will leave him no chance of getting any articles he may happen to

want, except at preposterous prices. A friend of ours made the experiment once, and found that the result of his morning's work was the acquisition of seven live canary-birds and a statuette—not a very useful contribution towards the filling of an unfurnished house. In despair, the new arrival does as most men find they have to do in England, if they want to avail themselves of auctions—he entrusts his purchases to an agent, who will look after his interests for the commission of five per cent. This agent is a native baboo—a sleek gentleman dressed in white muslin, who usually speaks and writes English after a certain fashion—sufficient for the object in hand. In a few days the purchaser will find a considerable number of the articles he wants, sent home to him at something like the prices he has fixed, and a great many articles which he may not want at all, which have been purchased because the baboo thought they would do. The baboo is often a better judge than his employer, and the chances are that the latter gets his house made habitable at the charge of from five to ten thousand rupees—that is to say, from five hundred to one thousand pounds. Of course there are many establishments in Calcutta which cost far more to furnish.

Servants are the next consideration. Of these our housekeeper must have a little troop. The durwan, or doorkeeper, who occupies a hut at the gate, is probably already provided—he had only to be taken on from the last tenant. For his own personal service, the sahib requires a bearer, or valet, who has an assistant to do subordinate work; a khitmutgar, or table attendant; and a similar set if there be a lady, the khitmutgar alone, in that case, being a man. Another bearer or two will also be required for the house, besides chuprassies, or messengers, for out-door commissions. Then there is a cook, as a matter of course, and he, if he have any self-respect, will require an assistant; as a matter of course, also, there is a khansamah, or steward, who buys everything necessary for the house, and a great deal more, and who will bring you the longest bills ever heard of unless well kept in hand. If the sahib keep a carriage which requires driving by anybody but himself, he must necessarily have a coachman; and for every horse he keeps, he must in any case have a syce, or groom, as well as a grass-cutter, to gather green food which cannot be procured in the bazaar. A dhobie, or washerman, is another necessity, and an extra dhobie, if there be a lady, for “the fine things,” and also a dizee, or tailor, or more than one, to mend the “things,” coarse or fine, as fast as the dhobie tears them, and to make up such articles of apparel as it may not be considered necessary to get from the “Europe shops.” To these must be added, in the hot weather—that is to say, during the greater part of the year—an indefinite number of coolies to pull the punkahs; and bheesties, or water-carriers, to supply the house all the year round; besides one or more malees, or gardeners, if the house happen to stand in a garden. Indeed,

whether there be a garden or not, many judicious housekeepers find the advantage of keeping a gardener, for the sake of a supply of flowers, which are obtained with much greater certainty in this manner than if grown at home. They come, no doubt, from some neighbours' flower-beds, but the recipients take a leaf from the rules of government departments, which always ignore any facts of which they have not received official notice.

A conveyance of some kind will be one of your first necessities. If you are a bachelor, and desire to practise rigorous economy, you may do without one of your own. A palankeen—called more generally a palkee—will take you any short distances you may have to go, and any long distances too, for that matter; but the motion is slow, and the jolting is fatiguing, and most men find it an intolerable nuisance to be long boxed up in a contrivance unpleasantly like a coffin. But a palkee is at your command, if you please, for the small charge of a rupee a day, and a slight bakhsheesh to the bearers. Your other economical alternative will be a hired vehicle, known familiarly as a "Dumdummer," for the ingenious reason that it is much in request to take passengers to a place called Dum-Dum, a few miles from Calcutta, and a little further off than most people care to take their own horses. These thika (hired) gharrees may be had for from two to three rupees a day; but I would not advise anybody to employ them—the turn-out being as abject a turn-out as was ever seen on four wheels. The body of the thing is very much like that of the dāk gharree, often described; but it is rather worse as far as springs are concerned, and the one or two ponies by which it is drawn are half a dozen degrees more wretched than London cab-horses. To crown all, the driver is always half naked, and occasionally three-quarters; being gratuitously dirty besides, he presents a more picturesque than polite appearance on the box. In addition to these drawbacks, he is quite as extortionate as he dares to be, and if engaged for the day will get his money in the morning if he can, when he first sets you down; after he has got it, you need scarcely take the trouble to look for him again, unless you wish to waste your time, as he is probably engaged, also for the day, to somebody else. A great many attempts have been made by reformers in Calcutta to get the public vehicles placed under proper control (even the price is not regulated by law, but is merely a matter of custom); but the indignant correspondents of the newspapers, and others who ventilate the grievance, are always told that the laws of supply and demand must be respected, and that any measures towards cleanliness, comfort, or safety, in regard to the gharree-wallahs, would be an interference with free trade. We do not hear of this objection in London, where the faults of our cab arrangements are certainly not owing to the want of despotic restrictions. But our law-makers in this country sometimes use cabs themselves, which our law-makers in Calcutta never do. In the

event of any swindling, you are of course told that "you have your remedy"—which you have, to be sure, when you can get it; but the process is at best difficult and vexatious, and is seldom worth the trouble involved. A third plan, available for those who do not keep their own conveyances, is to hire them at a livery-stable; but this has its drawbacks, as a carriage and pair costs sixteen rupees a day, and a buggy and horse six; and in the latter case, where you drive yourself, you are exposed to all the chances incidental to a vicious horse, and the smash, if not of yourself, at any rate of the vehicle.

If you buy a conveyance of any kind you must take care that it comes from an European maker. A native-built vehicle will look very well at first, but you will soon find that it is constructed on principles once adopted by the Chinese in building ships of war upon the English model: which ships were wonderfully ship-shape in every apparent respect, but would not swim. A very few days of exposure to the sun or rain will set a native-built carriage gaping in all directions; the panels are found so shrunk or swollen as to have no relation to each other; the doors will do nothing that doors should do; the spokes fly out of the wheels at the first jolting; and the springs are a delusion after the first week. The iron is rotten and the wood is green, and nothing is genuine but the putty and the paint, which cover up all defects. There are two or three English makers who have a good reputation, and of one of these you may get a very fair vehicle—a buggy for six or seven hundred rupees—a barouche or park phaeton for a thousand or fifteen hundred; but you may buy them, nearly as good as new, at auctions, for considerably less. Your horses will cost you much the same as in England. The country horses are far cheaper, but people drive larger and more pretentious animals in Calcutta—the Australian or Cape horses being much affected. A really good well-trained saddle-horse is always worth a good price, here as in most other places; but there is an objection to Australian horses, or "walers," for this reason—that they have an apparently unconquerable habit of shying at elephants, and camels, of which latter animals you may meet a string of a hundred or so anywhere out of the streets of Calcutta.

There is one advantage attaching to the keeping of conveyances in Calcutta, which compensates to a great extent for the original expense. Once procured, you may keep one going at comparatively little outlay. The current cost of a carriage and pair, including the pay of coachman and two syces, and the keep of the horses, need not be more than fifty or sixty rupees a month; the coachman being content with some twelve or fifteen rupees; the syces with six or seven; the grass-cutters with four. Your other domestic servants are paid at similar rates; your khansamah getting about as much as your coachman; and the other servants less, in proportion to their standing and importance.

On the whole, the expenses of a Calcutta

establishment, though considerable to "set up," are by no means so great in their current amount as might be supposed. The Calcutta establishment will cost less to keep going than one of similar size and pretensions in England. The difference in point of economy amounts to this.—A small income upon which you may manage very well in London, will scarcely enable you to live at all in Calcutta; that is to say, if you live in respectable European society; but granting that you would enjoy certain comforts and luxuries in either country, they are more easily obtained, on a moderately large income, in India than in England. You will get less in India, out of three hundred a year, but you will get more out of one or two thousand. Your wine will cost you more, but provisions of all kinds far less: except those, of course, which people persist in having out in hermetically-sealed tins from England—a practice indulged in far more than is necessary—owing to the fashionable enthusiasm for things European, and the fashionable depreciation of things native, prevalent among our countrymen.

An establishment in the Mofussil differs in many respects from an establishment in Calcutta. You have a bungalow instead of a house—that is to say, a kind of a house which is called a bungalow. It usually covers a good space of ground, as it well may since it has no upper floors; and it stands in an enclosure called a "compound." This may be laid out as a garden, or may lay itself out in any way it pleases—which is sure to be in a very lavish manner as regards rubbish and weeds: a great crop of rank grass growing up in the rainy season all of a sudden, to dry up and die out as the heat sets in. There are a few trees in it, and a few tombs, perhaps—the latter of which may not be disturbed without giving deep offence to the Mahomedan portion of the neighbouring population; the first signs of which would be manifested by the running away of your khansamah, bobachee, khitmutgars, and any other of your servants who chanced to be followers of the Prophet. And after these had run away you need be under no anxiety as to the chances of their coming back again, or the probability of getting others in their place; nothing of the kind would be likely to happen. You must, in such a case, be content with any horrible specimens of casteless Hindoos you could pick up, and your life would be a burden to you so long as you remained in the station.

Supposing that you do nothing so foolish as to disturb the tombs, you will have your establishment about you very compactly. On one side of the compound are a row of huts, intended for all the sahib's horses and all the sahib's men, and there they all live at their ease. The quadrupeds, it must be confessed, are as well provided for as the bipeds; and as for the syces, they generally share the horses' beds, sleeping between the feet of their charges in a manner which appears to be mutually agreeable. If pressed for space, the syces will even bring their wives and small families to partake of the same accommodation, and none

of them dream of considering the arrangement a hardship. In the daytime, the ladies of the family will bring their charpoys (you can always carry your bed about in India), and recline thereon pleasantly in the sun, making the children's toilettes, as far as they can be said to have any, and occasionally their own, with all regard to modesty, but with a perfect absence of constraint. The household arrangements of your other servants are also transacted at the doors of their dwellings; and as most of the men have wives, and most of the wives have children, there is sometimes no little crowd and confusion. A whole village talking at once, at the top of its voice, might give some idea of the rush of tongues. Mussulmans and Hindoos agree very well in general intercourse, and exchange the most intimate confidences concerning their master's affairs—especially those of a pecuniary character, with regard to which they are sometimes better informed than the sahib himself; but their familiarity extends no further. They will not eat together. The Hindoo goes to a retired part of the compound and cooks his dinner by himself, at a fire made by means of a couple of bricks and a little hole in the earth, or he has it brought to him by his wife, or somebody of his own caste; and he feeds in silence and mystery. The shadow of a Christian, or a Mahomedan, or even a Hindoo of lower caste than himself, falling on the meal, is supposed to defile it. Its owner will not taste it after the contamination, but casts it to the winds, or the dogs, or any pariah Hindoo who may care to pick it up. Your Mahomedan servants will not be so particular about their meals, though they always take them among themselves. Sometimes they take them in the middle of the night, for the sake of the cool air (as do the Hindoos also, indeed), in which case the united clatter of tongues and tom-toms (at these nocturnal feasts music is usually introduced) is enough to drive a light sleeper to despair. The Mahomedans prefer not to eat from the master's table; but conspicuous instances have been known to the contrary under circumstances of temptation. Khansamahs and khitmutgars have been seen, when intruded upon unexpectedly, deep in overland hams, and imbibing champagne not wisely but too well—very like orthodox Christians. But these same men, if you required from them any little sacrifice of the kind, might not have the smallest compunction in murdering you.

As regards their wives, the Mahomedans are more exclusive than the Hindoos. Indeed, the original inhabitants of the country never thought of shutting up their women until their conquerors came, and made such exclusiveness fashionable. Now, the wife of your humblest Hindoo servant will make a show of pulling her chudda over her face as you pass her charpoy on your way to the stable, though if she be at all handsome she will take care to be as tardy as possible in performing the operation. As for the Mahomedan women, they do not disdain to

afford the same facilities, but they generally make a much greater pretence of mystery. We had a khitmutgar once who could not have been more than eighteen years of age, and he had two wives, who assumed the airs of being "purdah women"—that is to say, women who can never be seen at all in public. These he disdained to keep in his house in the compound, contenting himself with bringing them there occasionally, shut up in close palankeens, from which they were smuggled into the hut with a wonderful amount of precaution.

But we are lingering in the compound, and have not yet entered the house.

The structure, seen from the exterior, may be very ugly or very pretty, according to the taste of the builder, or the tenant, or the resources of either. The most conspicuous part is the roof, which is of thatch, sloping on all four sides, and extending to within some eight or ten feet of the ground; it covers not only the house, but the verandah, which is sure to be some six or eight feet in breadth. The verandah, of which the roof is supported by pillars of greater or less pretensions, serves as a protection against both the light and the heat, which are very intimately associated in India, where you cannot keep a room very cool unless you keep it rather dark. Indeed, some persons shade their apartments to such an extent, that the occupants can scarcely see to read. The drawing-room and dining-room are, in many bungalows, situated in the centre of the building, so that no light is admitted to them except through the outer apartments, which open directly on the verandah; but they are sometimes more pleasantly placed. From the reception-rooms, in nearly all cases, the bedrooms and dressing-rooms open, and as doors are very uncommon contrivances up the country, and curtains and screens are the general substitute, that retirement from the world which is achieved in England every night by marching up-stairs and locking yourself in your bedroom, is very difficult of accomplishment. When half-doors, or screens, are in use, in the hot weather, morning visitors are never astonished if they see a bed in the perspective, or any other indications of the interior economy of the mansion; and if you have sought your couch at all early at night, you need not be surprised if you hear a great deal of the conversation of those who are sitting up.

The furnishing of a house in the Mofussil is a far more simple matter than in Calcutta. New upholstery is a vanity of which nobody dreams. There is a certain quantity of furniture in the station, more or less old, which circulates among the community, according to demand and supply. When there is a departure from the station, the departure's "things" are sold off, of course, the residents take what they want, and the remainder goes to a dealer. When there is an arrival, the arrival takes what he can get, and furnishes at once or by degrees, according to his luck or resources. The departure or arrival of a regiment will cause an important change, and a great many of the station movables will be redistributed. To

meet the inevitable wear and tear incidental even to Mofussil upholstery, the dealers will occasionally speculate in new articles from other stations, or even occasionally from Calcutta, and will so give a relief to the general monotony. But a Mofussil house, though adorned under accidental and even precarious conditions, may be made very agreeable to the eye. The walls of your room are generally of whitewash, or whitewash with a dash of colour, but the room itself is so large that the roughness has no unpleasing effect. On the floor, you will probably have some coloured canvas, printed in patterns to look like a carpet, or relieved in the centre by a real carpet from Mirzapore, having a very brilliant, if rather a hot, effect. Curtains are not very general, but a great deal is sometimes done in this way with a little white muslin. The glass-doors, which are also the windows, are shaded outside by green jalousies, or jilmils as they are locally called; and when these are thrown back, they are shaded by chiks—that is to say, by blinds formed of thin strips of wood, thinner than lucifer-matches—extending across the doorway, and strung together just close enough to keep out the flies, but not the air or the light. These are very convenient, as you have nothing to do but lift them aside when you pass in or out; when painted in bright colours they have a decidedly ornamental aspect.

The punkah is such a prominent article of furniture, especially if there be more than one in the room, that it is found desirable to make it as pleasing to the sight as possible, and a great amount of decoration is frequently bestowed upon it. It is difficult to make anything very graceful out of what in its unadorned state looks like a broad wooden plank, extending the width or the length of the room; but a great deal is done by a little ornamental painting, and a fancy frill (the latter being of especial use in circulating the air); sometimes, instead of the common wooden frame covered over with canvas, which the apparent plank is in reality, the frame will be made of carved mahogany, and the place of the canvas will be supplied by red plaited silk, like the fronts of cabinet pianofortes. This is a gorgeous arrangement, and, to accustomed eyes, seems such a necessary part of the furniture, that after a little time the room would look bare without it. You soon reconcile yourself to its removal, however, when the cold weather comes on, and to seeing nothing of it for four or five months. This is only in the Mofussil; in Calcutta the punkahs are rarely taken down, though they are disused for a short time in the year. Punkahs are most peculiar to the Bengal Presidency. In Madras they are less used, and in Bombay less than in Madras. The operation of pulling is usually transacted in the verandah: the rope being passed through an aperture in the wall—a very convenient arrangement as regards your bedroom.

The punkah, by the way, in the provinces, is found sufficient—if you have a long frill, sweeping as nearly on a level with your pillow as will allow you to keep your head clear—to

obviate the necessity for mosquito-curtains which are an intolerable nuisance in Calcutta.

Another appendage to a house in the north-west is the tattie. This is a kind of screen fitted closely into the space left by the open door, and composed of a sweet-scented grass called khus-khus. It is employed only during the hot winds, in April and May, and the doors are furnished in this manner according to the direction of the breeze. Coolies, stationed outside, dash water against the tatties, and keep them continually wet, so that the harder the hot wind blows without, the cooler and more fragrant is the air which reaches within. Fruit, and water in porous jars, may be advantageously placed to cool under this influence; and round the tatties people gather as round a fire at home. Indeed, you may occasionally see our countrymen complete the analogy by cooling themselves as they warm themselves elsewhere—that is to say, by standing with their backs to the tattie with their coat-tails under their arms.

The Mofussilites, as a general rule, lead a far more primitive life than people live in Calcutta. They get up earlier in the morning, go to bed earlier at night, and take more exercise during the day. The early ride, drive, or walk, is more general, and the afternoon siesta—generally admitted to be a bad habit—less frequently indulged in. Nine o'clock is a common hour for retiring to rest, and there are few amusements out of doors to tempt people to stay up later. Dinner-parties dissolve at about half-past ten. Amateur theatricals will occasionally induce later hours, and a ball later. But these amusements are only a change from ordinary habits. A billiard-table at a military mess or elsewhere will keep stray men going till twelve or so; but these exceptions do not apply to those who usually pass their evenings at home.

The expenses of an establishment in the Mofussil are far less than in Calcutta. Your house-rent will not amount to more than a sixth of the Calcutta figure. You will keep about the same number of servants, but their pay is not quite so high as in the metropolis; the country horses which you principally employ are much less costly than the larger kinds; and if you buy them unbroken, and look after their training yourself, you may get them wonderfully cheap. But a great deal of money may be spent upon horses, in the Mofussil as in most other places, if you are inclined that way, and some people are. The great advantage is, that they cost very little to keep when you have got them.

Your provisions—always excepting those which you choose to have from Europe—will also cost you very little. Anything in the shape of a bird is nothing comparable in price to the Calcutta figure (fowls may be had so low as three-pence apiece), and meat is even cheaper in proportion. Mutton is most approved, and it is customary for several persons to club together and keep a flock and a shepherd: the members of the club looking after the accounts by turns. When a member of a mutton-club leaves the station, somebody is always ready to take his share off

his hands, the advantage of the plan being indisputable. The mutton of the Patna breed, generally employed in the north-west, is very like Welsh, and is as good as any that Wales ever produced. With regard to beef, you generally take your chance of the native supply; with pork sensitive people never have anything to do, in a country where the pig appears to exert himself to the utmost to justify the prejudice against him.

In the matter of ice, some such arrangement is made as in the matter of mutton. A subscription is entered into at the beginning of the cold season, for the manufacture of this inestimable luxury, and the task is entrusted to a competent superintendent, who generally volunteers his services. The *modus operandi* is this: When the cold season begins, large earthen pans or dishes, containing water, are laid out at night in a convenient place, and the ice which forms upon them is gathered in the morning and deposited in a large pit. The supply thus daily obtained for some four months during which ice-making is possible, is sufficient to last the station, all through the hot weather: the residents being supplied every day with allowances in proportion to their subscriptions. The ice is not very solid or very clear, but it cools your wine, beer, and soda-water most effectually, and is even available for ice-puddings and creams. At the principal Mofussil stations we suppose this manufacture will soon be abandoned, as the railways will take the real Wenham Lake Ice daily from Calcutta, where it comes by ship-loads at a time, and where it may be had, to any extent, cheaper than in England.

The housekeeper in the provinces will do well to guard against a not very improbable contingency—having his house robbed. The ordinary bungalows are built on such very primitive principles, that fastening them up at night is little more than a ceremony; and even to that extent the operation is not always performed. Whether you are robbed or not robbed, depends entirely on your servants. As a matter of course, you keep one, and, as a general rule, two chokedars, or watchmen, who come on duty after sunset, and whose office it is to patrol round the house all night, calling out to one another at intervals, in insane sounds, by way of furnishing proof that they are not asleep, and that nothing is the matter. They carry long staves tipped with iron, the principal use of which seems to be to keep them on their legs; for, as regards habits and general efficiency, they bear a family resemblance to the British watchman of departed days. Sometimes they are honest men, and sometimes they are not honest men. It is to the housekeeper's advantage that they should be of the latter class, and for this reason: they are nearly always old men, and, in the natural course of things, will now and then sleep at their posts. If they be honest, the thieves will take advantage of the opportunity to enter the premises. If, on the other hand, they belong to the dishonest fraternity, the house will stand a good chance of

being respected: the salaries of these gentry being regarded in the light of black mail which should exempt the proprietor from further extortion. Fortunately, however, it is not upon the chokedars alone that you have to depend. Your servants live on the premises, and do not betake themselves to distant homes at night, as in Calcutta. Some sleep in their huts in the compound, but several will always be found rolled up in their rugs in the verandah, and a couple or so will, if you tell them, repose in an ante-room inside, in order to be ready for any required service during the night: the service most likely to be required of them being the waking up of the punkah-pullers, who like to go to sleep on duty, though they had twelve hours for the purpose before their duty began.

A robbery cannot very well be effected without the knowledge of some of your servants, and without a tolerably unanimous agreement among them not to inform. It is on this account that one seldom hears of a house being entered by thieves; for Indian servants are not so inclined to dishonesty, perhaps, as servants in Europe. It is true they do not consider theft so disgraceful as we do, and do consider the European, to a certain extent, fair prey. It is true they will pilfer on their own account individually, and will take stray articles that may not be in use, on the chance of those articles not being missed, and therefore, they argue, not being wanted. They have a kind of conscientious statute of limitations by which they abide. If you ask for the thing within a certain time, they say it is safe in their keeping, and you have it at once. If you let the time go by, the thing will have gone somehow, and they know nothing about it. They restrict themselves, too, to articles in their respective departments. Your khitmutgar, for instance, would not think of taking your boots, and your bearer would show an equal reticence with regard to your cooking utensils. Either will probably try to take your plate, or your money, if placed under lock and key; but both plate and money will be generally respected if committed to their care. You may give hundreds of rupees to your bearer or khansamah, leaving him to make all necessary disbursements, and your money will be accounted for to the last pice. He will even regard himself in the light of your banker, and will make payments after the funds are exhausted: not reminding you until the settling day arrives that you have overdrawn your account. He will make a small per-centage out of most transactions, in all probability, but this is a dустoor, or custom, generally recognised, and the money does not come out of your pocket. Your khansamah receives a similar allowance upon the price of every article he supplies to your table. Some of our countrymen in India are scandalised at this proceeding, and prevent it as far as they can; but the system is prevalent more or less in all large houses at home, so there is no reason to accuse Indian servants of any peculiar immorality on this account. This is certain:—your Indian

servant, if he plunders you a little himself, will not allow anybody else to do so. Your safest course, therefore, is to place yourself in his hands.

A regularly organised robbery, if it do take place in your house, is a very disastrous affair. Not on account of the property stolen—that is probably of the least importance in the catalogue of your annoyances. If you pocket your loss—as the Irish gentleman said—you simply give an invitation to anybody who may take a fancy to your spoons, forks, side-dishes, centre-piece, jewellery, what not, to come in and help himself when inclined. You must, for your own protection, make a demonstration in the matter. The consequence is, that the native police come and take every servant out of your house, and keep them all in prison while the case is investigated. The investigation occupies days, if not weeks, and during that time you are utterly lost and helpless. In the end you are glad to abandon your prosecution, and take your old servants back again as if nothing had happened.

But, on the whole, you will meet with less dishonesty up the country, than in Calcutta; in neither place will the cares of your establishment cause you much domestic disquiet if you use some little care in the selection of your servants, and know how to manage them when selected. The art does not need any great experience to acquire. It consists principally of regular pay and judiciously kind treatment, which will be found to go even further in India than elsewhere.

PETTER, LATCH, AND JARMAN.

"FROM the old country, sir, I guess? Thought so by your countenance. Your first visit, sir, to the U-nited States, may I presume?"

The gentleman who put these questions in a nasal drawing tone that bespoke the New Englander, had just entered the saloon of Colonel Pegler's little hotel at Lockhaven, in Pennsylvania. He had not come by the stage, as I had, but in a spider-wheeled tandem, drawn by two fine horses, which equipage I had seen through the window as I sat at dinner, and which he drove skilfully enough. The new comer was a tall loosely hung man, with the straight black hair, the restless eyes and sallow complexion, common throughout the States, and was of a somewhat dandified appearance, in spite of the dust which clung to him.

"Want your dinner, sar?" asked the negro waiter, entering the room at this juncture, and almost before I could reply that I had never before crossed the Atlantic. The new comer made answer in the affirmative, glanced over the bill of fare, and the wine list, and then muttered something about getting rid of the grey dust of a Pennsylvania road, and hurried out.

Black Cicero transmitted the orders of the stranger to book-keeper and kitchen, and then came back to his favourite occupation of staring from the window and knocking down gnats with

his napkin. The manner of the new arrival had made a favourable impression, and Cicero made no secret of his opinions.

"Certain, mas'r, dat some great man. Bootiful hosses, reg'lar Albany bred, smart carriage and silver-plated harness. Don't see such in 'tupid ole Lockhaven ebbery day. Hate Lockhaven. Give warnin' and go, when month up. Cicero from de ole South, mas'r, not used to mean ways of dese parts."

Cicero was sure that the stranger was governor of a state, mayor of a town, or, at the least, the "boss" of some grand firm in the Empire City. Before I could inquire what a boss might be, the subject of these commendations returned, with washed hands and brushed coat, and Cicero scuttled off to fetch the turkey, venison steaks, green corn-cobs, Maine ham, stewed fish, and unknown vegetables, which formed the most attractive portion of Colonel Pegler's rather scanty bill of fare. These he speedily brought, along with a bottle of old Madeira, and the new guest fell upon the repast with the swift and silent hunger of his nation; it was not until his appetite was quite appeased that he asked me any more questions.

"Touring, sir?"

"Not exactly," I answered, in a hesitating manner, for I was new to the country and its ways, and my heart was heavy within me. The two months I had spent in America had been months of worry and disappointment. I felt the stranger's keen eye as he scanned me with a pertinacious scrutiny that would have been downright rudeness in the Old World, but was not necessarily such in the New.

"Allow me to offer you a glass of this wine. It is really tolerable, though no more South Side, as it pretends, than a Hoboken oyster is a Mississippi alligator," said my perfunctory friend, speaking with good-natured volubility as he saw me pick up my hat and glance towards the door, in meditation of a retreat. "Your company will be really a favour, and I hope you won't leave me with no conversation accessible but that of a country bar-keeper." Not to appear churlish, I took the seat to which the hospitable Yankee beckoned me, and filled my glass at his invitation. The wine was good, much better than the cheap Catawba to which my lean purse had hitherto confined me, and the American did not ply me with direct questions, as before, but, by a succession of delicately-put hints, drew from me an amount of information, the retrospect of which afterwards surprised myself. Young as I was, I was not so complete a greenhorn as to reveal my precise circumstances to a mere inquisitive stranger. My new acquaintance contrived to impress me with the belief that he was not actuated by common curiosity, and the sympathy with which he listened had great effect on onelike myself, alone in an unfamiliar country, and having as yet met nothing but rebuffs and hope deferred.

I told him how I had been brought up to consider myself as heir to my uncle, Mr. James Hill, of Cockington, a man of considerable pro-

perty; how an unlucky misunderstanding, for which I could not fairly consider myself to blame, had arisen between the rich bachelor uncle and the penniless nephew; and how, rather than submit to what I esteemed injustice, I had taken my name off the books at Cambridge, had renounced all hope of my relative's inheritance, and had undertaken to support myself. I told him how, not having been brought up to any profession, I had been baffled in every attempt to gain employment in the densely-stocked labour mart of the Old World; how, by the advice of an old college chum (who had pressed a loan of money upon me along with the advice), I had started for America; how I had, as yet, found no opening here. That very day I had come back disappointed from the Susquehanna canal-works, where I had hoped to be engaged as a sub-surveyor, but had been rejected for lack of practical knowledge. "Your mathematics," the head-surveyor had said, "are all tarnation fine; but what I want is a chap that's a dab with the dumpy and theodolite, and you never, by your own showing, did a day's work with the instruments. Sorry, but you won't suit."

My only hope now was, as I told the American, to get engaged as mathematical teacher in some school or college.

My sympathetic friend shook his head.

"Poor work, sir, that. Schoolmasters don't count for much in our glorious Republic. The two great powers of America, sir, are law and commerce. They lead to Congress and the Senate; to high diplomatic employ, the White House, and what not. Law's out of my line; but for commerce—hum! Would you like to be a drummer?"

"A drummer?" said I, much surprised, especially as my acquaintance had anything but a military air; "what do you mean?"

The American arched his eyebrows, and so far forgot his habitual courtesy as to murmur something about "British ignorance," and then proceeded to inform me that the duties of a drummer were to make journeys, solicit orders, make purchases, effect sales, bargain, call in debts, and otherwise promote the interests of his employers.

"In fact, then," said I, "what you call a drummer, is pretty much what we style a commercial traveller."

"The identical functionary," said the Yankee; "only, as this air a land of liberty and light, the social station of a drummer is much superior to that which he would occupy in your antiquated island. Now, fact is, we want a drummer, and if you find the salary and work to your liking, and we arrange, you may draw your twelve hundred dollars annual pay, with one per cent on net profits, and travelling allowance as liberal as Uncle Sam gives the Congress men. This, sir, is our address."

He handed me a large limp card, glazed and embossed, on which in pale gold letters glimmered the words, "Petter, Latch, and Jarman, Fourth-street, New York, G. J."

"G. J.," said I, rather puzzled; "what is G. J.?"

"General jobbers," said the American, solemnly; "and I am Hannibal C. Petter, at your service. Fill your glass, and allow me to ring for a fresh bottle. Here, you snowball, Cicero, be spy with more Madeira, and get some chips of ice, do you hear? We speculate in all notions, from whale-teeth to Lyons velvet; and just now, there's an operation coming off West, in which you could try your wings."

Long before the wine in the second bottle had ebbed away, I was duly engaged as drummer to the firm of Petter and Co., conditionally on my testimonials being approved by my employers. The college friend, to whose good nature I owed the means of starting in the New World, had procured me one or two introductory letters to respectable residents in New York. These gentlemen had not been able, at the time, to assist me in finding a situation, crowded as the city was with needy candidates from Europe; but they had received me civilly enough, and I knew they would vouch for my being what I professed to be.

It was settled that I was to repair to Cincinnati, and there to await the receipt of remittances from the firm. The "operation," I was told, consisted in buying up, for ready cash, a considerable quantity of corn, flour, wheat, apples, pigs, pork, and other articles of Western export, which Mr. Petter styled by the generic term of "pro-duce," and which were now supposed to be cheapened by a glut in the Eastern markets. The firm, however, had reason to know that this phase of affairs was merely temporary, and their arrangements were already made for shipping two cargoes of provisions to Europe, where they had an advantageous contract with the heads of one of her Majesty's dockyards.

Very lucky I thought myself, especially when Mr. Petter, before calling for his bill and ordering out his tandem, insisted on pulling out his pocket-book, and forcing a number of dollar-notes upon me.

"There, there, dear sir; you travel on *our* account now, remember. Put up at the President House, Dr. Parlam's Hotel, when you get to Cincinnati, and I will forward the remittance there. When you come to New York, I shall be glad to present you to my partners. Latch has a delightful house, and his wife is a most accomplished matron. Jarman is, like myself, a bachelor. I am sure they will approbation the engagement which I have been fortunate enough to form with yourself. Six o'clock. I must slide. Adieu, Mr. Hill!"

Off went Hannibal C. Petter, leaving me half bewildered by the suddenness of my good fortune.

There were plenty of the members of my new profession, as well as partners, junior or senior, in Northern houses, on board the Ohio steam-boat; but there were none to whom my employers were known. To be sure, as one of the Philadelphia men observed, the growth of New York was gigantic, and so many new firms annually sprouted into existence, that many of them must necessarily be unknown to fame.

"Petter, Latch, and Jarman," said the Philadelphian, thoughtfully; "one of those names hangs, somehow, to my memory. 'Tain't Jarman though, nor Petter. Must be Latch. Let me see. There was a fellow of that name barber on board the Missouri steam-boat Jefferson; same man, do you think, now?"

"I should think not," I answered, more than half indignant at the question. "I have not the honour of being personally acquainted with Mr. Latch, but I have Mr. Petter's authority for affirming that he is a wealthy citizen. And his wife——"

"Ah! this Latch had a wife, too—not that there's anything wonderful in *that* coincidence—but I have heard that Madam Latch hadn't her equal for kidnappin' nigger babies: a perfect talent she had for it, and got hold of more bits of live ebony, among the free blacks to Ohio State, than any slave-stealer in the country. It was a way she had of talking over the mothers with fine words, for she was well educated, was Hetty Latch. Her husband made Missouri too hot to hold him, but the States Marshal never could put salt on him, never. A smart chap, Latch."

The Philadelphia broker whistled a bar or two of the Star-spangled Banner as he walked away, and for some minutes I was exceedingly uncomfortable. However, the awkward impression produced on my mind by the late conversation, soon wore off. I had no reason to think the barber of a Missouri packet was connected with my employer, the rich and hospitable merchant, in any other wise than as bearing the same name. And his wife, too, whom the senior partner had described as an accomplished matron, what connexion could there be between her and an obscure female who earned some base gain by wheedling credulous negroes out of their children for the supply of the Southern markets? Absurd! It seemed ungrateful on my part even to give such a groundless suspicion, a temporary resting-place in my mind. What a contrast did my doubts afford to the frank confidence of Mr. Petter, whose dollars I had actually in my pocket, and at whose cost I was now voyaging. I blushed at my own meanness of spirit, and rather eschewed the company of the Philadelphia man for the rest of the trip.

I was by no means solitary in my new mode of life, and I found a new pleasure in American society. I was now a member of a recognised guild, and free from the harassing curiosity which seldom fails to beset a traveller, native or foreign, whose exact rank and business furnish an enigma to the sovereign people. Mr. Petter had cautioned me not to be over-communicative as to the nature of the "operation" which my zeal and the funds of the firm were to carry out in the teeming West, and I kept my own counsel. It was wonderful how many people on board the steamer seemed to know one another. Most of these were bound for Cincinnati, like myself, though some were going on to more western cities; but I was surprised to see how widespread was the acquaintance of nearly all those

sallow men and pale ladies. To some of the latter I was formally presented by a communicative gentleman, who had previously introduced himself as the editor of the *Chillicothe Argus*: a journal of which I was ashamed to own that I had never heard.

"Allow me, sir, to be the means of making you known to Mrs. Pook, a leader of fashion at Cincinnati. Gives soirées of a splendour which whips anything the down-easters can manage, and unites all the beauty, elegance, intellect, and natural nobility, to be found in the Queen of the West. Major Elijah Pook, not at present on board, is an eminent citizen. Dry goods. Supplies many village stores. Is part proprietor of the *Argus*, and can give you most valuable information about the country."

I found myself making my bow to a lady of drab complexion and Parisian costume, who glared at me through a pair of blue spectacles, while her three daughters tittered a more cordial greeting to the Englishman.

"Welcome to Columbia, sir; welcome west," said Mrs. Pook, in a deep voice. "I shall be happy, sir, to see you at my receptions, if you make any stay in Cincinnati."

I expressed my acknowledgments, but could hardly help laughing, since it was the first time that my ears had listened to that strange peculiarity of New England pronunciation, confined to some districts of the coast, which throws an undue emphasis on humble pronouns and adverbs, careless of sense. But Mrs. Pook, although in her own judgment and that of others a strong-minded personage, was really a kind good woman. When she learned that I was quite new to the country, had no friends or relatives there, and was stranded, on an unknown continent, an innate hospitality softened her usually didactic tone, and she patronised me in a gentle, motherly way.

I passed three or four very pleasant days in Cincinnati, before any communication reached me from my distant employers. The hotel to which I had been recommended was a large and splendored, and its dining-hall and drawing-room filled daily with a numerous company, while I made many acquaintances in the city. On the second evening, I was duly invited to one of Mrs. Pook's receptions; was introduced to the major; and had the honour of dancing a quadrille with the youngest daughter, Miss Abigail, who asked me for more information about the aristocracy and court of Great Britain than I could have imparted, had my sole reading consisted of *Burke's Peerage* and the *Gotha Almanack*.

On the fourth day of my stay, the major asked me to dinner, and volunteered any assistance in his power towards effecting whatever business had brought me to the Queen City—with one reservation.

"Unless," said the worthy man, "your errand is dry goods. There, I can't help you. My own line, you perceive. And I have dealt consistently with Philadelphia jobbers these twelve years, and find them far more easy to trade with

than your New York uppish merchants; begging pardon, Mr. Hill, if you are in that groove."

I hastened to reassure the major. I knew nothing of dry goods, and it so happened that the padlock was taken off my lips. For, that very afternoon, a heavy parcel of bank-notes, accompanied by urgent instructions to lose no time, had reached me from New York, and Mr. Petter expressly advised that I should ask some independent citizen to point out the best localities for investing in raw produce. Major Pook proved valuable in this capacity. Both as a wholesale linendraper and as part owner of a country newspaper which had a wide circulation among the farmers of Ohio and Indiana, he knew a great deal about the rural population.

"Sir," said he, "I'll be happy to accompany you, per boat, on Monday, down river a bit, and introduce you to some of the mammoth pig-dealers and most respectable farmers in the west of our state. No trouble, I assure you. I want to call at Madison, Tenedos, Amelia, and elsewhere, about business of my own—a new assortment from the old country, that makes Lowell Mills sing small, I guess."

Thereupon the major proceeded to give me some useful hints about the Western character.

"Our folks are main good grit," said he; "but they stroke ugly when you rub agin the grain. In a bargain with them, you needn't double and twist as you must with the down-easters, who think themselves robbed if their tongues don't ache afore a trade's effected. Strike quick and sharp, with no appearance of hurry, look 'em bold in the face, and be downright. Our folks hate tricks. Soft-sawdering Yankees get a queer lesson, whiles and again, when they come playing off their cunning dodges on our rough hoosiers and corn-crackers, they do."

The major's introduction smoothed the way for me immensely. Fine fellows, certainly, were many of the Ohio and Indiana farmers to whom he took me in the course of a couple of days spent in short trips up and down the river; but there was something rugged and stern in their bearing, and I could easily guess that they were quick to take umbrage. Their wives and daughters, too, were strong in person and decided of speech, quite unlike the languid ladies of the towns. The whole population reminded me much more of the first hardy settlers in New England than the people of the Atlantic States had done.

My task was comparatively of a simple character. I had to buy, and with ready money. My kind adviser gave me a verbal tariff of prices, and before the thick pocket-book was emptied of its notes, I was master of more grunting herds of swine, of more casks of pickled pork, more barrels of flour, apples, peaches, and Illinois pears, more sacks of maize, wheat, and buck-wheat, than seemed enough to feed the people of a starving city. My next business was to arrange for sending these up-stream. On this score I had my instructions, duly forwarded by Petter, Latch, and Jarman. I was to hire as many flats as might be necessary, and a tug-boat to tow them against

the current to a certain landing-place in Virginia, where an emissary of our firm would be in waiting, ready to superintend the transmission of the goods overland to Baltimore, where two schooners were lying in readiness for their reception. So far, so good; but one thing puzzled me. It might have seemed natural that I should accompany or precede my purchases on their way to the north-east. Not so. I was expressly enjoined to remain in Cincinnati until further orders reached me. It was obscurely hinted that my next mission might be one of increased importance, further south, and that my salary might also be augmented, in token of the house's appreciation of my energy.

"There," said the major, as I concluded my bargain with the boatmen to whom the flats belonged, and as we smoked our cigars on the promenade deck of the steamer working upstream—"there! Your business is over, and a good spec it will prove, if the Britishers pay well, for never were good mast and cob-fed grunterns bought for fewer cents a pound, and the flour's as sweet as a nosegay. A rough diamond that old Dan Wormald, the pig-merchant."

"He was, indeed," said I, as I recalled the gaunt grizzled countryman who still wore the uncouth attire of the early "pioneers" and whose leathern hunting-shirt and boots of well-greased hide matched well with his horn-hafted knife and five-foot rifle; "he was, indeed, and one I should be very sorry to offend. What's the matter? Some one overboard?"

So indeed it was, as a shrill outcry of female voices announced, and there was a rush to the side of the vessel. It was a poor little black child, a girl of six, that had fallen overboard. We saw her frock of light-hued cotton, float for a moment on the surface of the turbid river, now flecked with white foam and boiling eddies, for the pilot had hastily called to reverse the engine. The father, a stunted ugly little man, with a basket of carpenter's tools at his back, was hanging over the rail forward, and screaming out passionate and incoherent entreaties that some one would "sabe Polly."

"Let every chap shoe his own hoss. River runs like a mill-swash," muttered a lean saw-toothed Yankee at my elbow. This seemed to be the general sentiment of the company, though two or three of the deck hands bustled to launch the dingy, under the captain's orders. Just then I caught sight of the poor little frightened face coming to the surface again; there was no resisting the piteous childish eyes; and before I well knew that my mind was made up, I had flung my coat off, plunged into the yellow waves, and caught a firm grasp of the drowning child. I could swim well, but the current was strong, and I was swept down many yards, before the boat overtook me, yet the whole thing was over in a couple of minutes, and I was aboard again, dripping like a wet water-spaniel, and the steamer was under weigh, while the negro carpenter was hugging his little daughter in his arms; and almost deafening me with his clamorous thanks.

"There, my good man—there—it's all right. You are very welcome to the trifling service I rendered you—but pray don't do *that*," said I, as I tried to shake off the enthusiastic negro, who clung to my hand, and wanted to kiss my feet, and made himself and me ridiculous in the eyes of the white passengers.

"O massa, mas'r Britisher, Job thank you so, poor black rascal so 'bliged! Mas'r not know what Polly is now to Ole Job, de only joy of him life, ebber since him poor wife Dinah die, same year we run from Alabama plantation, sar, and Job carry child in 'um arms, all way, through swamp and——"

"Come, come, we can't have this here. The child's all right, barring a wetting. Get away down ladder to your own part of the boat!" said Major Pook, pushing the humble little man away, kindly but peremptorily. As the negro made a parting salute and shambled off to the portion of the steamer reserved for those of his colour, I saw that he was lame, and that even if he had been a swimmer (no common accomplishment in America), he could not have made the plunge overboard with any chance of rescuing the sufferer. As for myself, I had merely obeyed an instinctive impulse in hurrying to the aid of a helpless creature, white or black; and while I wanted no credit for an act of common humanity, I was a little annoyed by the sneering comments of some of the passengers, who seemed to think me Quixotic for risking my own life for that of a "nigger brat." In half an hour we arrived at Cincinnati, where I changed my wet clothes. Having averted a cold, or a touch of fever, by taking a liberal supply of what the major called "brandy medicine," before quitting the packet, I was in no way the worse for my immersion.

Matters went on smoothly. The provisions, dead and alive, were duly shipped and sent up-stream, and, while awaiting fresh orders from Petter and partners, I received several invitations from the hospitable people of Cincinnati, and had no reason to complain of my position. Once or twice I happened to meet Job, the black carpenter, who was a dweller in one of the suburbs of the city, and I am afraid I was rather harsh in my decisive rejection of the poor little dusky fellow's proffered civilities. Job was very grateful, but his feelings prompted him to such ludicrous exuberance of homage and affection that I was compelled to shirk his society. A Briton is rarely pleased with any public expression of sentiment; and besides, I fear I was learning from the Americans around me to view the coloured race with something of their own contempt.

People in the Western States almost always dine early, and there was nothing extraordinary in Major Pook's asking me to dinner at two o'clock on the Saturday which followed the shipment of the provisions. Saturday, in Cincinnati, is always a busy day, as the market is sure to be thronged, and the country-folks to assemble in greater numbers than on other occasions.

I was not the only guest at the major's table. My earliest introducer, the editor of the *Chillicothe Argus*, was also there, as well as the Hon. Sampson Petty, one of the State representatives, and a family newly returned from a residence in Europe, and whose conversation turned wholly on the titled persons to whom "Our Minister" had introduced them. The ample meal was not half over, before a distant sound, heard above the clatter of wheels and the tramp of hoofs in the street, struck on my ear. Nearer and nearer it came, gathering in strength and distinctness, swelling from a sullen hum into a dull roar, and mingled with the tread of many feet, fast approaching. The major heard it too, and laid down his knife and fork to listen.

"There must be a demonstration," said he, thoughtfully; "and yet it's not election time, neither."

At that moment the door opened, and a ragged Irish boy, who was retained to black shoes and run errands at the hotel where I lived, came bursting into the room.

"Mr. Hill, your honour," panted the breathless lad, "fly for't afore they surround the house. They'll show you no marcy, sure as my name's Mike Sullivan."

Everybody started, and a great clamour of questions commenced, which Mike answered merely by wringing his hands and exclaiming, "Wirra, wirra! 'tis murdered ye'll be, and I've most kilt myself scampering to warn ye. They've been to the hotel, and they're comin' here fast, and tare an' ages, if they catch ye, there'll be bitter work done, and you always spoke civil to Mike, so—"

But before Mike could finish his speech, and before I could even guess what had occurred, a tumultuous body of men, armed with guns, axes, crowbars, and other weapons, poured into the open space in front of the house, and advanced with loud shouts and excited gestures. At their head was old Daniel Wormald, flourishing his rifle high above his head, with his hard features swollen and distorted by fury.

"Some mischief has happened! The citizens have got their backs up, wild-cat fashion," said my host, as he threw open the window and boldly demanded the cause of disturbance. There was a confused outcry.

"That's Pook—hurrah for Pook!" cried one man, while another bawled out the threatening words, "Pook be scalped! He introduced the tarnation Britisher to us. Mebbe he's to git a slice of the profits!"

"The Britisher! Give him up! Pitch him out! Or we'll tatter the house like a riddled pumpkin-rind!" shouted a score of others. I sprang to the window.

"Gentlemen—" I began. But my voice was drowned by the dreadful yells that greeted my appearance, and I instinctively recoiled, while old Wormald snatched an axe from one of the lumbermen in the crowd, darted forward, and struck a shower of heavy blows on the polished mahogany of the door. The Honourable Samp-

son Petty was very white and nervous, and I heard him whispering to the major to "give me up," but before two minutes the door was driven in, and the mob, chiefly composed of angry countrymen, came pouring in. For some moments my life hung on a thread; I was roughly seized by many hands; my clothes were torn; I was struck, hustled, and banded to and fro; nothing but the pressure of the throng kept me on my feet. But my host showed great courage and good sense, and was so firm and fearless in his reiterated demands for silence, that a short lull took place.

The major spoke up, the instant there was silence, asking "what harm" I had done.

"Robbed us!" responded Wormald, very grimly, and I felt his knotted fingers tighten as they twined themselves in my cravat; "robbed us! But we'll take it out of him another way."

"I have never robbed you; never wronged you of a shilling," I gasped, half choked.

"Tell that to Judge Lynch!" answered a rough bargeman, aiming a blow at my bare head with the heavy crowbar he carried. Major Pook caught the man's arm, and warmly appealed to the crowd not to act like wild beasts, but to bring forward their accusation in a rational way.

"See here, Pook," said old Wormald, pulling out a roll of crumpled notes, "hyar's what your smooth-spoke friend hev paid me in, he hev. An' what he's done to me, he's done to all. Them fine white-fisted dandies of New York town, they must cheat hard-working Western men, must they, and pay for our substance in bogus notes, not fit to light a pipe?"

"Bogus notes! Forged notes! Do you mean to say those notes are forged?" cried I; and I felt the blood rush to my face, and my brain reel.

"Yes, and you know it," cried one; while "Down-east smasher," "British hound," and other flattering epithets, poured upon me in a shower, and it was in vain that I protested my innocence, since even Pook shrank from my side.

My tale was, indeed, improbable. It suited the angry mob better to believe me an accomplice of Petter and Co., whose villainous treachery now glared upon me, rather than to credit my being a dupe and scapegoat. They were all smarting from recent loss, and from the disgrace—always keenly felt in the West—of having been tricked; and the rugged hoosiers and corn-crackers vied with each other in fierce suggestions for my punishment.

"Lynch him! Tar and feather him! A ride on a rail, thirty-nine with a green cowhide, and a dip in the Ohio!" roared one. "A rope! a rope! There's a lamp-post handy!" yelled a second; while Wormald malignantly declared that he had seen "rowdies burned for less," and that a halter was only too good for me.

In this crisis, Mrs. Pook saved my life. She alone seemed to believe in my innocence; and she pleaded with a vigour that carried all before it. No other interference could have saved me; but Americans of the roughest sort have a deference for "a lady;" and Mrs. Pook was especially popular with the mob, to

several of whom her ready purse and well-stored medicine-chest had been useful in a time of poverty or fever. So it fell out that I was neither hanged nor cowed, but merely dragged in the centre of a noisy and menacing crowd to the court-house; where, to use the expression of the Honourable Sampson Petty, I was "given up to justice."

Muddy, ragged, and exhausted, with torn clothes and dishevelled hair, I must have presented a wretched spectacle when put to the bar, while the clamour of my rude accusers filled all minds with the very worst opinion of me. With some trouble, order was restored, and a detailed account of the transaction was rendered. The forged notes were produced in court, and, being examined by experts, were unanimously pronounced to be "bogus," or counterfeits, though admirably executed. They were quite plausible enough in appearance to satisfy simple husbandmen, and it was only on market-day, when a number of them had been offered and refused at the banks of the city, that the cheat was detected.

Every face I looked round upon, was hostile and unpitiful. Even those who had few scruples as to the morality of the transaction, evidently scorned me as a clumsy tyro, and viewed me as the Spartans did a convicted pilferer. I heard one man mutter to his friend that I was a "raw Britisher," and another remark that "'twas a smart idea, but I had fixed it awkward." However, though no one seemed to give the slightest credit to my explanation of affairs, the judge decided that, on technical grounds, I must take my trial elsewhere than at Cincinnati. None of the goods had been purchased in the city; the fraud must be investigated and punished at the following assize in the county where the notes had been passed; and I must be confined in Madison jail for the present.

To Madison I was accordingly removed, in custody of the deputy-marshal and a party of police. My escort had no easy work in protecting me from injury during the passage from the court to the steam-boat; I was pelted, hustled, and threatened; and it was only by dint of much firmness and coaxing that the officers cleared the way. Even on board the boat, I was not free from persecution, for several of the farmers were on their return to Madison, where they resided, and among them Wormald, who never lost sight of me until he saw me thrust into the little wooden building on the swampy bank of the river, which served the township for a prison. His parting speech was not of a reassuring character.

"Look'ee, my fine bird," said the old man, giving a sounding slap with his hard hand on the battered stock of his rifle; "I was loth to vex Madam Pook yonder, but don't think to get off without paying for what ye done. Four-and-forty hogs, eighty bar'ls of apples, two hundred sacks of wheat, hev I lost by you, jest to be larked at by your 'complices. But unless the judges give you a good spell of Penitentiary, I'll right myself with a ragged bit

of lead, Gospel sure! If you slip through the lawyers' hands, I'll hev blood for them hogs, or my given name is not Dan."

A very melancholy time did I pass in that Madison prison; no one came to see me, no one wrote to me; I seemed entirely cut off from human sympathy. True, I was wholly innocent, except of over-credulity, but that was only known to myself, and I could not right myself. All the profits of the affair had gone to my treacherous employers; all the suffering was mine. And it was a painful reflection that while my reputation was torn to rags, my liberty forfeit, and my life in peril, Hannibal Petter and the others were chuckling over the folly of their dupe as they divided the spoils. I grieved, too, for the hard-handed Western farmers whom I had unwittingly been the means of injuring, roughly though they had treated me.

The officials of the jail supposed me to be a rogue of the deepest dye, and gruffly requested me to keep my "innocent palaver" for the assizes. They refused me writing materials, and would not carry messages for me, saying that I should have plenty of time to consult a lawyer when the time of my trial drew near. They were not unkind in other respects; I was well fed, as is commonly the case in that district of plenty, and was even favoured with the loan of a couple of old books, battered copies of some New England magazine, bound up. I had some hopes that I might be able to persuade the judges of my being blameless in the fraudulent business wherein I had been made a tool, but the jury of rugged Western men—I shuddered as I thought of their stubborn prejudices and revengeful spirit. And even if I were acquitted, I had no trifling ordeal to pass through. Judge Lynch might rectify what he would think the blunder of the legal courts; and Wormald and his rifle were no light make-weights to a verdict of "Not guilty."

It was on the third evening of my imprisonment, as I was sitting alone in my cell reading the faded print of the old magazines by the light of a primitive lamp—the work of some travelling tinker, and whose huge smoky wick was fed by a quantity of melted tallow—that I thought I heard the gnawing of a rat in the wall behind me. An active and bold rat, too, to tear with busy teeth so steadily and long. The creature annoyed me, for my nerves were irritable, and I tried to frighten it away by knocking on the unplanned planks with the stool on which I had been sitting. The gnawing ceased, and I heard nothing but the wash and murmur of the great river that flowed without. But after the turnkey had brought me my supper and had locked me in for the night, the rat renewed his operations, though more cautiously, and for a long time the rasping and scratching continued.

It so happened that I had discovered a couple of old letters, yellow with age, between two leaves of my book, which had apparently been pasted together at the edges, and in these letters, ill-spelt and quaintly worded as they

were, I had found something to interest me. They were love-letters, written in New England half a century back. Their old-fashioned raciness of diction was often amusing, sometimes touching, so I read on, sorely puzzled to guess the meaning of some phrases, until my studies were interrupted by—

"Hi, mas'r! hist! dere no time to lose, sar."

I looked round, to discover that a small square hole had been cut through the wall of rough-hewn timber, and that the ugly honest face of poor Job, the little negro carpenter, was peering through it. I started up, and could not restrain an exclamation of surprise. The black's rolling eyeballs expressed alarm, and he pressed his finger on his lips.

"Mas'r sabe little Polly's life, and Job owe mas'r a good turn. Britisher in jail; all him fine white friends desert 'um—Job one poor black rascal, but Job come to set mas'r free."

And the little man began to work away with his saw, more vigorously than ever.

"My poor fellow," said I, my heart smiting me as I remembered how unkindly I had repulsed the black's uncouth gratitude; "I cannot avail myself of your generosity. I ought to take my trial, or they will say I am guilty, and—"

"Mas'r talk what hab no sense in him. Dey all angry, fierce men, an' will hab revenge, whether Britisher try cheat 'em or no. One day, dem cool down—all right; Job hear Mas'r Wormald and de rest, at tavern, talk ob not wait no more—too long to 'sized—break prison-door and hang up Britisher on tree—Judge Lynch!"

Rasp, rasp, went the saw.

This news decided me that it would be fatal scrupulousness to await the result of a trial. I therefore accepted the saw which Job handed me through the aperture, and before long our combined efforts had made a sufficiently large hole to allow of my egress. Job hurriedly thrust back his tools into his wallet, and pricked up his ears as a distant noise reached him.

"Dis way, mas'r. Job hid de ole dug-out 'mong rushes. Yah! dem de Reg'lators for sartain. Quick, sar."

Hastily we embarked in the little "dug-out," or canoe, grasped the paddles, and shot out into the stream. As we did so, the sound of angry voices and crashing woodwork became very distinct, and a flash of bright torchlight from every window proved that the excited rabble had burst into the little prison.

"Golly, mas'r, we only jest in time! Nebber care. Ole Kentuck not far off."

A few minutes' paddling bore us in safety across the broad river to the Kentucky bank. I was still dressed in the torn clothes in which I had been brought to Madison, but Job's thoughtfulness had provided a lumberman's coarse suit of blue blanket cloth, which

was rolled up in the canoe, and which he insisted on my wearing as a needful disguise. He himself was to return straight to Cincinnati. He was confident that no one would know or suspect his share in my escape, the penalty of which, to one of his colour, would be burning alive, at the hands of the fierce populace.

I was miles away before dawn, walking rapidly south; by morning I found myself far from the Ohio, and approaching a town. Hungry and footsore, I was much in need of rest and refreshment, and now remembered for the first time that I was penniless, having been deprived of my watch and purse on my confinement in the jail. Something heavy in the pocket of my blanket-coat attracted my attention, and on examination I found it to be a little heap of dollars, dimes, and cents, tightly twisted up in a scrap of some old newspaper—Job's parting gift—perhaps the poor black's whole savings. Thanks to Job, I was thus enabled to reach Lexington, where I found employment in a school. More than a year afterwards, I was in New York, and ventured to call on the merchant to whom my college friend had introduced me. I told him what had happened.

"Petter, Latch, and Jarman!" said he; "why, my good sir, their trial has been the excitement of New York for the last five days; the Herald and Tribune were full of it, but perhaps you don't care much for our high-pressure journals. At any rate, they are condemned to the 'Tombs' for life, and though Petter tried to prove an alibi, he failed entirely. They were sad rogues—made a science of forgery, and usually kept clear of the dangers into which they pushed their victims. By-the-by, Mr. Hill, there's a letter been lying here for you these three months, sealed with black wax."

The letter announced the decease of my uncle, and that, in a death-bed revulsion of feeling, he had made me his heir. Before quitting America I paid every cent due to the Western farmers: who sent me a sort of round robin, in which they fairly owned that I was freed from blame, and that they had been in error. I need not add, that my faithful friend, poor dear Job, was not forgotten in my hour of prosperity.

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